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Disarmament Commission
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New York

Chairman: Ms. Quarless ..... (Jamaica)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

General exchange of views (*continued*)

Ms. Du Buisson (South Africa): Please accept my delegation's congratulations, Madam, on your assumption of the chair of the 2000 Disarmament Commission. I also wish to welcome back the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of the two Working Groups, as well as the other members of the Bureau. Please be assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

At the Commission's 2000 session, my delegation expressed concern over the inability of the multilateral disarmament forums and the international community to substantively address some of the most central issues of our day, reflecting a deepening crisis in international relations, non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control. To this end, we remain concerned over the continued inability of the Conference on Disarmament to start its work and the fact that most First Committee resolutions do not enjoy the support of all Member States and that the work of this Commission is often ignored. We, however, believe that the positive conclusion of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the conclusion of the Preparatory Committee's preparation for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects; and the progress made towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will serve as inspiration to delegations to actively engage in the work of this Commission.

The South African delegation is hopeful that our deliberations at this session on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament and on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons will be focused, so as to allow the timely conclusion of the Commission's deliberations on these two agenda items at this session. In this regard, my delegation wishes to thank the respective Chairpersons for their working papers, which we consider a good basis for our work during this session. Only through focused consideration of these two agenda items will the Commission remain a relevant deliberative body. To this end, I wish to assure the Commission of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Nuclear disarmament is considered by all States to be one of the most important disarmament issues facing the international community. Moreover, nuclear disarmament is a concern of the entire international community. South Africa, however, remains concerned over the continuing refusal by many States to recognize that this is indeed the case. The lack of agreement on a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament is indicative of the lack of commitment to achieve progress in this field.

South Africa, like many other non-nuclear-weapon States, expected that the positive outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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(NPT) — at which the nuclear-weapon States made an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear weapons — would have set in motion practical ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament. We remain hopeful that the undertakings given by the nuclear-weapon States will be honoured, undertakings to further reduce their nuclear arsenals unilaterally, to increase transparency with regard to their nuclear-weapon capabilities, to further reduce non-strategic weapons and to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in security policies, and that all five nuclear-weapon States would engage in the process leading to the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

These undertakings — as well as the agreements on the establishment of an appropriate subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament to deal with nuclear disarmament and on the negotiation within five years of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices — would provide much-needed momentum for progress in the field of nuclear disarmament. In addition, a lot remains to be done to ensure a nuclear-weapon-free world. In this regard, concrete agreed measures to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems, such as de-alerting and removal of nuclear warheads from their delivery systems, are urgently required.

My delegation wishes to reiterate South Africa's firm position that the Commission's deliberations on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament should build upon, but in no way diminish, the undertakings given and agreements reached on a substantive agenda for nuclear disarmament at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. I wish to emphasize that South Africa will not lend its support to any effort that will undermine the success achieved at that Conference. Furthermore, our deliberations should support the process in the Conference on Disarmament, and we should consider other tangible ways and means to positively address the core elements required to facilitate action and results in moving our disarmament agenda forward.

Although nuclear weapons constitute the greatest threat to the survival of mankind, the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of conventional weapons has a negative impact on confidence among States, especially among neighbouring nations. The build-up of conventional weapons beyond a level that can be considered legitimate for the purposes of self-defence creates an unstable environment, in particular in areas where regional instability leads to regional conflicts. It is a commonly known fact that conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, are the source of most of the death and suffering in conflicts around the world today. The rebuilding and prosperity of society that are gained from various peace and democratization initiatives are curtailed by the accompanying proliferation of these weapons. In this connection, my delegation welcomes the non-paper prepared by the Chairperson of Working Group II.

One of the factors underpinning practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons is the need for transparency. My delegation circulated a working paper at the Commission's 1998 session with regard to South African policy on transparency in armaments. South Africa continues to believe that the scope of the current United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is too narrow, as it does not include smaller types of weapons such as small arms and light weapons, which have become the weapons of choice to destabilize countries in many regions of the world. We remain convinced that an expanded Register, or a similar reporting system on other categories of weapons such as small arms, light weapons, explosives and non-lethal military equipment, either as part of the current Register or in the form of separate regional and/or global registers, would enhance confidence among States.

South Africa also considers the destruction of surplus, confiscated or collected weapons no longer used by government forces as an important, practical and tangible measure to promote confidence among States in the field on conventional arms. It is for this reason that my Government decided to destroy all surplus small arms rather than to sell them. The latest destruction phase took place during January this year, at which another 102 tons of small arms, parts of small arms and spares were destroyed. In addition to this destruction, hundreds of tons of conventional weapons and ammunition have been destroyed in cooperation with the Government of Mozambique during different phases of "Operation Rachel". The destruction of these weapons forms part of my Government's commitment to regional efforts in southern Africa to create a peaceful and stable environment in support of much-

needed socio-economic development and poverty eradication.

I wish to recall that at our previous session my delegation circulated a working paper in which we emphasized the value of the destruction of surplus and collected weapons as a practical confidence-building measure. In considering practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, the Commission should take due cognizance of the preparations for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. My delegation wishes to reiterate South Africa's strong support for the draft programme of action prepared by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. Our deliberations at this session should therefore be in support of the draft programme of action, and should not unnecessarily complicate progress in this regard.

In conclusion, my delegation remains committed to working in the Commission and in all other disarmament and non-proliferation forums to achieve the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and to limit the numbers of conventional weapons to the minimum required for self-defence. My delegation stands ready to work with you, Madam Chairman, and with the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups, in pursuit of the goals set out for the Commission in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament, which called for every effort to be made, insofar as possible, to adopt decisions on substantive issues by consensus.

Mr. Ko (Myanmar): At the outset, the Myanmar delegation would like to extend its warm congratulations to you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the 2001 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. We firmly believe that under your leadership we will reach a fruitful conclusion to our deliberations. I would also like to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation towards the successful conclusion of this session. I would further like to extend my appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his comprehensive statement at the beginning of this session.

We are now entering the second consecutive year of discussion on the items entitled "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", and there is a need to focus more on bridging the gap among delegations in producing concrete results from our deliberations.

We had all placed high hopes on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament after the successful conclusion of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The statement by the five nuclear-weapon States during the 2000 NPT Review Conference reaffirming their willingness to engage in systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally was a positive contribution to the outcome of the Review Conference. The nuclear-weapon States should abide by their commitment and should follow through with actual implementation. In striving towards nuclear disarmament, ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by all nuclear-weapon States is a requirement, while at the same time, strict observance of the terms of bilateral and multilateral disarmament machinery is a prerequisite.

We believe that the START II treaty should be implemented and that negotiations on a START III treaty should be initiated urgently. We are also concerned about possible tests of missile technology, which could lead us to a new arms race. My delegation expresses hope for the early establishment of an ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament to discuss nuclear disarmament and for the re-establishment of the ad hoc committee on a fissile materials ban to commence negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons should be one of the fundamental issues in nuclear disarmament. That is why we welcome any progress achieved in the Conference on Disarmament to establish a mechanism to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons by accidental or intentional triggering.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones also constitutes an effective measure in preventing geographical proliferation of nuclear weapons, thus contributing towards nuclear disarmament. Myanmar is accordingly supportive of all efforts to establish nuclear-free zones. In that connection, more than 100 countries have signed and ratified their respective regions' treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The Myanmar delegation believes that confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms should be built upon systematic and steady approaches. Without hampering the right to national self-defence or the right of self-determination of States, we should cooperate with each other. We also believe that this should be based on the principles of the sovereign equality of States, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and respect for the mutual interests of nations.

Myanmar has been actively participating in the work of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in a constructive and productive way since it became a member. We attended the first ASEAN Regional Forum meeting on confidence-building measures held at Seoul from 30 October to 3 November 2000. We believe that such meetings at the regional level enhance confidence-building in the specific region and in other regions as well. The Association of South-East Asian Nations and the European Union met at Vientiane on 11 and 12 December 2000 for the thirteenth ASEAN-EU ministerial meeting, under the co-chairmanship of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and France, acting as President of the Council of the European Union. Among other things set out in the Vientiane Declaration, confidence-building measures were explicitly mentioned, as follows:

> "We agreed to enhance our cooperation in regional security more generally, notably through the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which we recognized as an important forum for dialogue on peace and security issues in the Asia-Pacific region. We underlined the importance of the confidence-building measures which have been undertaken as the primary focus in the strengthening of the ARF process, and encouraged further efforts to intensify the confidence-building measures as well as to finalize the concept and the principles of preventive diplomacy. The European Union indicated its readiness to share its experience with ASEAN in those fields."

I would like to conclude, Madam Chairperson, by reiterating our commitment to closely working with you towards a fruitful outcome of our deliberations.

Mr. Sood (India): Please accept my delegation's congratulations, Madam, on your election as the Chairperson of the Disarmament Commission at its 2001 substantive session. We assure you of our full cooperation in the discharge of your tasks. We would also like to place on record our appreciation for the efforts that have been made by the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups.

India's unwavering commitment to global nuclear disarmament and to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time was stated unambiguously in this very forum last year. I will therefore not belabour those points again. I would like instead to focus on the ways and means that have evolved from my country's principled position, which should help our collective efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament.

When we met last year, perhaps there was a feeling among some participants that the Disarmament Commission needed only to echo and take note of certain tantalizing promises made in the framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), without necessarily engaging in substantive discussions here in this room. Developments since then, during the past year, have belied that euphoria. Instead of seeing a reinforcement of the disarmament agenda in bilateral or multilateral settings, we saw the reality of unfulfilled promises, missed opportunities, the search for unilateral advantages, the hardening of confrontational postures, threats to unravel instruments that form the basis of global security, and a Conference on Disarmament that is kept in suspended animation. An unjust and discriminatory framework has proved once again that it is fundamentally flawed and is incapable of providing a fair and equitable system that respects the legitimacy of equal and undiminished security for all. This realization will hopefully infuse a greater degree of sobriety and seriousness into our deliberations this year.

Let us in the Disarmament Commission, which is the deliberative leg of the triad of disarmament machinery having a more universal representation than most other disarmament forums, set down the principles and measures that will pave the way to agreed, multilateral, non-discriminatory and irreversible nuclear disarmament.

First, we should recognize and respect the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of July 1996, which holds that

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". (*A/51/218, annex, para. 105 (2) F*)

It is necessary to translate this *obiter dictum* of the International Court of Justice into a politically binding decision and eventually a legal convention. It is in this context that India seeks a convention on the prohibition of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Second, we must also seek a review of nuclear doctrines that claim the unacceptable posture of first use; pursue a global no-first-use agreement that includes legally-binding assurances of non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States and recognizes nuclear-weapon-free zones established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region. India has already made unilateral commitments in this regard and would exhort other nuclear weapon States to do so in the interim, while the international community works towards converting these into legal obligations.

Third, we must implement the resolve expressed at the Millennium Summit to convene an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. There is no justification for maintaining thousands of weapons on hair-trigger alert. All nuclear-weapon States need to commit themselves to reducing the risk of unauthorized, as well as accidental or unintentional, use of nuclear weapons.

Fourth, we must insist on the irreversibility of nuclear reductions by honouring bilateral commitments on tactical and strategic nuclear weapons. This should be complemented by reductions in a multilateral framework.

Fifth, we must discourage unilateral action that may be perceived as being inconsistent with existing treaties or which threaten the principles of legitimate security for all.

Sixth, we must prevent the weaponization of outer space, rather than having to resort to arms control or disarmament measures later.

Seventh, we must enable the Conference on Disarmament to commence work in ad hoc committees established with appropriate mandates relating to nuclear disarmament, the fissile material cut-off treaty, outer space and negative security assurances.

We are ready to engage in substantive discussions relating to each of these points, as they merit fuller consideration.

Let me focus now on conventional disarmament. As for practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, we have made it clear that we must avoid duplication of work undertaken elsewhere, while taking into account the guidelines on certain aspects already agreed and adopted by consensus in the Disarmament Commission itself. We hope to achieve greater progress on this subject than was possible during the last year. We have participated actively in the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, scheduled for later this year. We are hopeful that a successful Conference will contribute to the creation of substantial confidence-building measures by addressing the problem of illicit transfers and its close nexus with cross-border terrorism, drug-trafficking and organized crime.

India has ratified all the Protocols of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), including amended Protocol II, dealing with landmines, and Protocol IV, on blinding laser weapons. The universalization of the CCW process through signature and ratification of its Protocols by more States would constitute a significant confidence-building measure in the area of conventional weapons. The CCW Review Conference at the end of this year will provide an opportunity for peer review of the process and adherence to it.

India has consistently attempted to rely on confidence-building measures with countries in our neighbourhood in the interest of maintaining international peace and security. India has been the initiator of many confidence-building measures and will continue to pursue these actively. The price that has to be paid for confidence-building measure initiatives could sometimes be excessive and could threaten to unravel the best of intentions. We therefore hope that discussions in our Working Group will produce substantial results soon in the form of practical and useful guidelines.

My delegation seeks to actively participate in the deliberations in the days ahead, with the hope that we

will be able to achieve significant results at this session.

Mr. Bebars (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to extend to you, Madam Chairperson, our sincere congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission for this year. I wish to express our full confidence in your ability to steer the deliberations of the session. I also wish to thank and express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Javad Zarif, for his wise leadership of the proceedings of the previous substantive session. I also wish to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

Egypt attaches special importance to the meetings of the Disarmament Commission, one aspect of the disarmament machinery that elaborates guidelines that will contribute to disarmament efforts and non-proliferation. The work of the Commission this year assumes special importance, given that this is the second session dealing with the special framework for guidelines on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament, as well as practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. Hence, negotiations have started this year on the elaboration of guidelines that could be adopted next year, taking into consideration the different views of States presented at the 2000 session.

First I will touch on the topic of nuclear disarmament, which is the main priority of disarmament efforts, as expressed in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. That priority will continue to govern our work until we achieve the full elimination of nuclear weapons. Despite the fact that the title of the item on nuclear disarmament that we are discussing in the framework of the work of the Commission is so general, we are hopeful that this topic will be dealt with in the same spirit that prevailed in the course of the Sixth Review Conference on the Parties to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

That spirit led to the adoption of a Final Document that contained comprehensive obligations on the part of the nuclear-weapon States with regard to achieving nuclear disarmament, in addition to emphasizing the specific nature of the situation in the Middle East. Nuclear armaments and other weapons of mass destruction pose a threat to humanity. Logic therefore dictates that international efforts should be intensified so as to pave the way for developing the necessary mechanisms to completely eliminate that danger — an international framework that should be commensurate with the scope of the threat.

We therefore believe that the Conference on Disarmament must be activated, as it is the only negotiating mechanism on disarmament matters. The Disarmament Commission should also adopt clear-cut guidelines aimed at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. It should also work to achieve the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the implementation by the five nuclear-weapon States of their obligations under article VI of the Treaty.

Special regional efforts for nuclear disarmament constitute fundamental endeavours that complement international efforts for nuclear disarmament. These efforts are designed to fully eliminate nuclear weapons and free the world from their dangers. The States of our region, the Middle East, have committed themselves to achieving that lofty goal by acceding to the NPT. That represents a clear-cut renunciation of the nuclear option and a declaration of our intention to free our region from nuclear weapons. It also embodies our States' commitment to moving these efforts from the regional to the universal level, with a view to freeing the world from nuclear weapons. Israel alone has impeded the efforts of the region by continuing to stand by its nuclear option and refusing to accede to the NPT and subject its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Sixth NPT Review Conference was therefore compelled to express in its consensus Final Document the need for Israel to accede to the Treaty and to subject all of its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the Agency, with a view to achieving the aim of full accession to the Treaty in the Middle East.

This was again reaffirmed by an overwhelming majority of 157 votes when the special resolution on the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, resolution 55/36, was adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth regular session. That resolution contained a new operative paragraph — paragraph 2 — which

"*Reaffirms* the importance of Israel's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, in realizing the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East".

Egypt accords particular importance to the need to achieve the goals and respect the principles of nuclear non-proliferation in the Middle East and throughout the world. It also understands that the threat of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East is a pressing issue that must be dealt with expeditiously. In this connection, we would like to highlight the efforts being made and the initiatives being taken by Egypt with a view to eliminating weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. Efforts made since 1974 include the introduction by Egypt of draft resolutions on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which have been adopted by the General Assembly by consensus since 1980. In addition, every year the General Assembly has adopted, by an overwhelming majority, a resolution aimed at ending nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. That resolution was further developed during the course of the fifty-fifth regular session of the General Assembly.

Parallel with these efforts, in April 1990 President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak undertook a special initiative aimed at freeing the Middle East region from all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems so as to eliminate the dangers of such weapons. This was a natural extension of Egypt's initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. In this connection, Egypt welcomed the proposal put forward by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to hold an international conference to consider ways of eliminating nuclear dangers. The General Assembly endorsed that proposal in adopting resolution 54/282.

In 1998, in support of the Secretary-General's proposal, Egypt took the initiative to hold an international conference to consider ways of freeing the world from nuclear weapons within a specific time-frame. In the context of Egyptian efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament, and with a view to setting out fundamental prerequisites in this connection, the States of a new coalition — Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden — have introduced for the past three years draft resolutions to the General Assembly entitled "Towards a nuclear-free world: the need for a new agenda", which have been adopted and reflect the philosophy of the coalition States. In these resolutions, the General Assembly has emphasized the clear obligation of the nuclear-weapon States to eliminate all nuclear weapons and to take practical measures to accelerate the achievement of the universality of the NPT.

Confidence-building measures are one of the main issues to which we accord special importance. Despite the fact that the Disarmament Commission has considered the matter of conventional weapons, we are nonetheless of the view that there are many developments that should be reconsidered in the hope of arriving at agreed guidelines on this issue. Among the matters to be reconsidered in this connection is the extent to which the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has been successful as a means of confidence-building during recent years. In this regard, Egypt regrets the failure of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, during the course of 2000, to expand the scope of the Register so that it would cover military holdings and procurement through national production. We also regret the inability to include weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. This runs counter to the operative part of resolution 46/36 L, on the establishment of the Register.

This failure clarifies and highlights the stagnation that has enmired the work of the Register and its current invalid form as an effective means to build confidence and provide early warning. The Register's scope must be expanded to cover all categories of weapons without selective criteria, especially given that the experience of past years has made it clear that the Register — which contains only seven categories of conventional weapons — will not attract international participation. Many countries do not consider the Register, with its limited scope, sufficient to meet their security needs. Its success in the future will therefore depend on the international community's desire to achieve further confidence-building and greater transparency.

Mr. Sano (Japan): At the outset, let me congratulate you most warmly, Madam, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the 2001 session of the Disarmament Commission. Our greetings are also

extended to the other members of the Bureau. I sincerely hope that, through our deliberations, we will build upon what was achieved at last year's session. I can assure you that you will have my delegation's full support and cooperation towards a successful outcome of this session.

Allow me to state my delegation's views on the two topics of this year's session. I will begin with ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament.

About a year ago here in New York, the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) agreed by consensus on a Final Document, which contained the practical steps to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It was a remarkable achievement – all the more so if we consider the adverse international security environment which the international community was facing at that time. It clearly demonstrates that all the States parties to the NPT are seriously committed to the realization of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The agreement on the practical steps contained in the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference is our common yardstick for measuring progress in nuclear disarmament. The total elimination of nuclear weapons can be achieved only through the implementation of such concrete steps. Taking into account the agreement reached at the NPT Review Conference, Japan, together with Australia, introduced a new draft resolution, entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons", at last year's Millennium Assembly of the United Nations, which reaffirmed the Final Document and showed a path to be taken towards the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons. It was adopted with the support of 155 Member States.

Let me point out some of the concrete and immediate steps which this resolution enumerates as a matter of priority. First, with regard to the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the resolution has set 2003 as the target year for its entry into force. Those remaining 13 States whose ratification is required for its entry into force are urged to ratify the CTBT as soon as possible.

Japan, for its part, has been tirelessly promoting ratification of the CTBT among the countries concerned through such measures as sending high-level missions to discuss the issue. We have also been working hard in Vienna with other States as the coordinator for the second Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, which will be held here at United Nations Headquarters this coming September. Since the first Conference in October 1999, 24 countries, including five whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force, have deposited their instruments of ratification, while six have signed it, making a total of 75 ratifiers out of 160 signatories, including 31 whose ratification is necessary for its entry into force. We attach great importance to the success of the coming Conference. The entire international community should utilize this opportunity to give life to this historic instrument.

Secondly, the Conference on Disarmament should start negotiating a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices as soon as possible. Japan would like to see the completion of the negotiations by 2005, as called for in the General Assembly resolution sponsored by Australia and Japan. In this regard, it is truly regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament remains at an impasse due to the lack of an agreement on the programme of work. This year should be a year of progress. We cannot allow the credibility of the Conference to erode any further.

Japan would like to make every effort to maintain the political momentum that was encouraged by the NPT Review Conference. Together with interested countries, Japan is currently planning to make concrete contributions to support the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off (FMCT) treaty, following the excellent meeting on the verification of FMCT hosted by Germany and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in Geneva last month.

Thirdly, the reduction of United States and Russian strategic offensive arms is also of critical importance. The Japan-Australia resolution also recognizes that the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons will require further steps by the nuclear-weapon States, including the continuation of the nuclear disarmament process beyond START III and deeper reductions by all nuclear-weapon States, unilaterally or through negotiations.

Regrettably, the process is now at a standstill and the problem of strategic stability is impeding the immediate restart of the process. Prolonged dispute on this issue will lead to a continued lack of progress in arms control and disarmament. We strongly hope that

the nuclear-weapon States find a solution rather quickly through intensified dialogue.

Let me now turn to the issue of practical confidence-building measures in conventional arms. When we discuss confidence-building measures in conventional arms, we cannot forget the significance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as one of the few globally implemented measures. Since we submitted the resolution for the establishment of this mechanism in 1991, together with the European Union at that time, we have taken great interest in the evolution of this system. We have hosted several workshops with experts in Tokyo and have also promoted wider participation in the Register through bilateral contacts. We are glad that, as of last year, 92 countries had reported to the Register. However, the number of participating countries is far from satisfactory. We would like to reiterate the importance of wider participation in such a mechanism.

In the Asia-Pacific region, confidence-building measures have begun to play a more significant role than before through increased bilateral contacts and through various forums. One important achievement in the region is the establishment of the Association of South-East Asian Nations Regional Forum (ARF). In recent years, the ARF has implemented confidence-building measures, such as publishing the annual security outlook, submitting defence policy papers and encouraging countries to report to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Moreover, candid and frank discussions have taken place at high-level meetings on some sensitive security issues. The emergence of a tradition of such frank exchanges of views in this region is an indispensable process for achieving confidence-building measures among such nations. At the last session, we presented a working paper which features such topics regarding the ARF.

From the beginning of this year until now, we have witnessed several meaningful regional events related to confidence-building measures. One example is the ARF confidence-building measures seminar on conventional weapons transfers, which was hosted by the Royal Government of Cambodia and co-sponsored by Canada and Japan at Phnom Penh last February. Another example is the Korea-Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) conference on confidence-building measures, held at Seoul last month and hosted jointly by the Republic of Korea and the OSCE. These events have given us a good opportunity to reiterate the importance of confidence-building measures in the region.

The issue of small arms and light weapons is also linked to practical confidence-building measures in conventional arms. In the Preparatory Committee for the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, a draft programme of action was discussed and some confidence-building measures were proposed. Our delegation hopes that the discussions taking place in the Disarmament Commission will enrich the preparatory process for the Small Arms Conference. We also hope that a successful outcome of the Conference will contribute to our continued discussions next year. In this regard, Japan would like to make a fresh commitment to work hard to ensure a successful outcome of the Conference this coming July.

Lastly, we would like to express our appreciation to Ms. Gabriela Martinic, Chairperson of Working Group II, for providing us with her non-paper in advance. Our delegation considers this a good head start for further discussion. My delegation looks forward to participating in lively discussions over the coming days.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, Madam, let me congratulate you on behalf of the Chinese delegation on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission at the current session. I am convinced that, with your wisdom and diplomatic experience, you will lead this session to a successful conclusion. The Chinese delegation will cooperate fully with you, the Bureau and other delegations. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Javad Zarif, Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, for the contribution he made as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at the last session.

Mankind has entered the twenty-first century. At present, the international situation on the whole is moving towards relaxation. Peace, cooperation and development are the common aspiration of the international community and this quest is the general trend of the times. Nonetheless, there are still a number of hidden dangers in the international security arena. The cold-war mentality, hegemonism and power politics die hard. An inclination to achieve absolute security by gaining a military edge has been on the rise. Due to territorial disputes, ethnic clashes and religious differences, some countries suffer from

political turmoil and social unrest, and some regions are plagued with rampant conflicts.

At the beginning of the new millennium, countries are taking a keener interest in lasting peace and the common development of mankind, and desire new concepts and fresh ways of promoting international security that reflect the trend of the times. In today's world, security is mutual and indivisible. No country exists in complete isolation from the international community, nor can any country completely address all its security concerns completely on its own. While seeking its own security, a country must consider whether the measures it takes help increase the common security of all countries. True security for one country can be realized only when it is built on the basis of universal security and extensive international cooperation. Military superiority never guarantees security. Unilateralism at the expense of other countries' security leads only to greater insecurity.

China therefore advocates the establishment of a new security concept centred on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, cooperation and the settlement of disputes through dialogue. We in China believe that seeking absolute security for oneself through strengthened military alliances and an intensified arms race does not go along with the trend of the times and will never lead to genuine security. Only when mutual trust is enhanced through consultation and dialogue on an equal footing in pursuit of common security can peace and stability be genuinely maintained.

China has always attached great importance to the Disarmament Commission and has supported its continued efforts to promote international peace, arms control and disarmament. The Chinese delegation maintains that the positive role of the Disarmament Commission in formulating guidelines for global arms control is irreplaceable. In the current situation, this forum needs to be strengthened. We will continue contributing to the success of the Commission with a constructive attitude.

Nuclear disarmament is an important agenda item in the Disarmament Commission. The Chinese delegation believes that international nuclear disarmament efforts are at a crossroads, and prospects are disturbing. So far, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has still not reached agreement on a programme of work. This has left the multilateral nuclear disarmament process in stalemate for several years. START II has yet to be implemented, and negotiations on START III seem a far-off objective. Thus, the Russia-United States bilateral nuclear disarmament process is at a standstill.

It must be pointed out that the crux of that matter lies in the attempt by a certain country, aiming at absolute security, to press ahead with a national missile defence system covering the whole of its territory and to introduce weapons into outer space on the basis of its superior economic, scientific and technological capabilities. The Chinese delegation believes that this will greatly shake the foundation of nuclear disarmament and poison the security environment in such a way that nuclear disarmament cannot proceed. Thus, it will have grave consequences.

First, this is in essence a disguised form of unilateral nuclear-arms expansion that will severely hinder the international arms control and disarmament process and may even trigger a new round of the arms race. A relatively stable balance of power among major countries, and a global strategic balance based thereon, are the prerequisites for progress in the international arms control and disarmament process. The country concerned, which possesses a cutting-edge nuclear arsenal and the most sophisticated conventional weapons in the world, pursues a policy of nuclear deterrence based on first-use of nuclear weapons. Thus, a national missile defence will become an offensive arms multiplier for that country. This will not only severely impede the United States-Russia, and even the global, nuclear disarmament process; it will also render meaningless any initiative to reduce offensive nuclear arms.

Secondly, this will severely disrupt stability and the global strategic balance and undermine mutual trust and cooperation among major countries. To develop and deploy a national missile defence system, one has to clear the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. Admittedly, the ABM Treaty was a product of the cold war. However, like all the other arms control treaties, it reflects the interdependent nature of the security relationship between the parties. Such interdependence did not disappear with end of the cold war; rather, it has become even deeper in the era of globalization.

Thirdly, it will seriously undermine the international non-proliferation regime and related efforts. We must not lose sight of the fact that the

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of missiles is a very complex global issue which can be tackled only through global cooperation. A national missile defence system will not help in that respect. On the contrary, it will disturb the basis of the international non-proliferation regime and will provoke further proliferation of missiles, thus complicating the situation.

Fourthly, it will give rise to the ascendancy of the military factor in international relations, to the detriment of international peace and security. Once a solid shield is at hand, regardless of its effectiveness, the country concerned will be more prone to act unilaterally and to use or threaten to use force in international affairs. That will consequently create more instability in the world.

Fifthly, the introduction into Asia and the Pacific of a theatre missile defence system as a part of a national missile defence will do no good for peace and security in the region. Recently, concerted efforts by countries concerned have paid off, with some regional hot spots gradually cooling down, the regional situation relaxing, and, in particular, the peace process on the Korean peninsula experiencing a historic breakthrough. Contrary to such developments, a theatre missile defence system in that region can only be a new complicating and confrontational factor.

On questions of disarmament, China has all along advocated the following points. Countries with the biggest nuclear arsenals should reduce their respective nuclear arsenals irreversibly and on a large scale. The nuclear-weapon States should undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time or under any circumstance, should unconditionally undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, and should negotiate to conclude an international treaty on this. Nuclear-weapon States should withdraw their nuclear weapons deployed abroad to within their own territory and should give up the policy and practice of nuclear sharing and the nuclear umbrella.

We welcome the reduction by the United States and Russia of their respective nuclear weapons through either bilateral agreement or unilateral action. However, it must be pointed out that the reduction of excessive, "overkill" nuclear weapons for one reason or another and their transfer into so-called inactive reserves that are under constant maintenance are only a rationalization of the structure of those nuclear forces. They are by no means nuclear disarmament in its real sense. Such acts have to be rectified.

China has always stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons, thus making a unique contribution to the international cause of nuclear disarmament. As a nuclear-weapon State, China has never evaded its responsibilities and obligations on the question of nuclear disarmament. China has exercised utmost restraint in the development of nuclear weapons. Among the five nuclear-weapon States, China has the smallest nuclear arsenal, but it is the first to have undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. China has a small but effective nuclear force; China's sole and ultimate objective here is self-defence.

China took an active part in the negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and was among the first to sign it. The Treaty has been submitted to the National People's Congress, China's top legislature, for deliberation. China supports the negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty in the hope that the Conference on Disarmament will, in accordance with the provisions of the final document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), agree at an early date on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work on the three main subjects of nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space and a fissile material cut-off treaty, with a view to launching negotiations on such a treaty.

China understands the positive aspirations of a vast number of non-nuclear-weapon States for nuclear transparency, because we believe that the implementation of certain transparency measures, as an organic part of efforts towards a nuclear-weapon-free world, is necessary. But it has to be made clear that huge differences exist among nuclear-weapon States in their nuclear strategy, nuclear forces and security environment. And in that connection, countries must be allowed to take different transparency measures at different stages, bearing in mind that strategic balance and stability must be maintained and that the security of countries must remain undiminished.

The Chinese delegation is of the view that a strengthened and consolidated international non-proliferation regime is an effective way to prevent

nuclear proliferation and promote nuclear disarmament. Therefore, we call upon the relevant countries to sign the CTBT or accede to the NPT as soon as possible.

China believes that the establishment of practical and workable confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms is of positive significance for maintaining international peace and stability, relaxing regional tension and promoting sound development of the cause of disarmament and arms control. In that connection, we support and attach importance to the establishment and implementation of practical and workable confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

In recent years, China has been working for the furtherance of good-neighbourliness and friendship with neighbouring countries. China, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, within the Shanghai 5 framework and through consultation and cooperation on an equal footing, have signed an Agreement on confidence-building in the military field in the border areas and an Agreement on the reduction of military forces in the border areas. This sets an example for the international community in exploring new security approaches. We have always supported dialogue and cooperation in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum and have actively participated in and successfully hosted projects relating to confidence-building measures. China has also signed with India an Agreement on confidence-building measures in the military field along the line of actual control in the India-China border areas and the Agreement on Peace and Tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas.

The Chinese delegation welcomes confidence-building measures and steps that in recent years have been taken by other regions and countries in the field of conventional arms. We believe that these are conducive to enhancing mutual understanding and trust and to establishing sound and stable State-to-State relations, thus contributing to world peace and stability. Meanwhile, we also hold the view that the establishment of confidence-building measures must take into account regional differences, actual conditions and other specific factors. While it is necessary to draw appropriately upon the experience of others, it is even more important to adhere to the principles of ensuring that confidence-building measures are consistent with current conditions in the area and of seeking common ground while setting differences aside. It is not proper for countries to blindly copy the confidence-building measures of other regions or countries; nor is it good for some to attempt to point fingers or to impose confidence-building measures on others.

In an effort to establish practical and workable confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, the Chinese delegation would like to work together with other members of the international community and to put forward the following propositions.

First, countries, military Powers and, in particular, military groups should strictly adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter and should accordingly cease to interfere in other countries' internal affairs by wilful use or threat of use of force. This, we believe, would create the necessary international security environment for the establishment of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

Secondly, the improvement of the international security environment, the maintenance of the international strategic balance and stability and guarantees of undiminished security for all should be the prerequisites and the basis for all confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

Thirdly, it must be fully realized that the field of conventional arms is closely related to other disarmament areas. Any plot or attempt that may lead to the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space will certainly have grave repercussions, endangering all efforts to establish confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

Fourthly, a new security concept centred on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation must be advocated. The principles of sovereignty and voluntarism must be upheld and a policy of gradual progress from the easier to the more difficult items has to be pursued. Only in that way can we lay a solid foundation for the establishment of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons throughout the world.

Fifthly, any attempt at military expansion and strengthening of military alliances in the guise of establishing confidence-building measures must be opposed. Any move that disregards universally

recognized facts and undermines other countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity, under the pretext of military trade, must also be rejected.

Maintaining world peace and regional stability serves best the fundamental and long-term interests of the 1.2 billion Chinese people. China's biggest task in this century is to focus on economic development and on continuously improving the livelihoods of its people. To that end, China will unswervingly pursue an independent foreign policy of peace, will further its sound and cooperative relations with other countries in the world, will strive for a long-term peaceful international environment and a good general environment and will work for lasting peace and common security for all countries in the world.

Mr. Li Hyong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Please allow me to begin by congratulating you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the current session of the Disarmament Commission. I believe that your able leadership will lead to successful deliberations on all the agenda items before us.

Ensuring durable peace on our planet is a long-cherished desire of all humankind and is fundamental for establishing just international relations. Countries and peoples desiring peace, and standing in opposition to war, have set nuclear disarmament as a major task in order to attain permanent world peace and have made strenuous efforts to realize comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

In particular, the commitment made by heads of State and Government during the Millennium Summit held last year to complete the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, was a significant step in encouraging global disarmament endeavours.

Non-nuclear-weapon States demand that nuclear-weapon States provide assurances not to use nuclear weapons against them, set forth a timetable for the elimination of all nuclear weapons and put it into practice at the earliest possible date.

Nevertheless, in the new century the issue of nuclear disarmament brings more serious challenges than ever before.

The new United States Administration is moving to opt for a policy of dominating the world with nuclear weapons, disregarding the demand of the times.

The United States, stressing the absolute role of nuclear weapons, is attempting, through all ways and means, to establish the national missile defence system, which is strongly denounced and rejected by the international community.

This attempt on the part of the United States creates the great danger not only that global disarmament and peace efforts will be rendered futile in their entirety, but also that a new nuclear arms race will be sparked. As long as such hegemonic power politics of the United States continue unabated, the nuclear disarmament so desired by humankind will never be realized. Therefore, we hold that hegemonic power politics, a major obstacle to the disarmament process at present, should never be tolerated.

After the historic Pyongyang summit and the announcement of the 15 June North-South Joint Declaration last year, aspirations for reconciliation, unity and reunification have been mounting in an unprecedented manner on the Korean peninsula. This is also welcomed and encouraged by the absolute majority of United Nations Member States.

However, we are witnessing moves to reverse these positive developments, and these moves are increasingly undisguised. The hard-line policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a case in point.

What is noteworthy in this regard is that the new United States Administration is unjustifiably picking on us in order to find pretexts for establishing the national missile defence system.

In order to enforce the national missile defence system, the United States continues to brand the Democratic People's Republic of Korea a rogue State, citing the non-existent missile threat from us. This is a brazen sophism, reversing black and white.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea made it clear to the Clinton Administration that it was willing to agree upon negotiated solutions to the missile issue in the interests of both sides. Our position at that time was as follows.

First, we have been working towards a satellite launch entirely for peaceful purposes, and if the United States guaranteed that it would launch our satellite free of charge, we would not launch a satellite by ourselves.

Secondly, we have been exporting missiles purely for commercial purposes, and hence we would stop missile exports as soon as due compensation in kind was guaranteed.

Thirdly, if the United States gave up its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we would discontinue the development of all missiles of more than a certain range.

Our position was officially clarified and discussed during the visit of the former United States Secretary of State, Mrs. Albright, to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and it was to be finally agreed upon at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States summit. This shows our sincere attitude and will as they are.

However, for other reasons the United States President at that time did not visit Pyongyang, and the present United States Administration refuses to proceed in this process.

In the light of the United States Administration's stance on enforcing the establishment of the national missile defence system, it is crystal clear why it is evading the resolution of a missile issue with us. This clearly shows who is the rogue in the true sense of the word.

No further remarks are necessary to explain that the real intention of the United States in pursuing the national missile defence system lies elsewhere. Therefore, whether the United States establishes the national missile defence system or not, it has nothing to do with us.

But as long as the United States continues picking on us in invoking the plea for the national missile defence system, we will have no choice but to take countermeasures.

Since the United States attempts to enforce the establishment of the national missile defence system by groundlessly accusing us and defying international opposition, our countermeasures also will not be bound by anything.

Our countermeasures will have no limit in their scope and depth, and we have the necessary potentiality, capacity and will. Even if this entails an arms race between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, and if all other agreements are scrapped, we will have little to lose.

We will make all efforts for peace in Korea, Asia and the rest of the world in the future, too, but we will never tolerate any attempt to impose peace in a unilateral and unjust way.

Mr. Lee Ho-jin (Republic of Korea): First of all, I would like, on behalf of my delegation, to extend my warm congratulations to you, Madam, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its current session. We are confident that, under your able leadership, this session will be fruitful. We would also like to convey, through you, our gratitude to the outgoing Chairman for his untiring efforts for the success of the Commission's work. Our thanks also go to the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his inspiring introductory statement.

The Disarmament Commission has played an important role as a deliberative body in the field of disarmament. Over the years, this Commission has elaborated guidelines for common ground on many issues. This year, we resume our deliberation on two agenda items: ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament, and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. My delegation looks forward to making progress in formulating guidelines on these two issues.

Let me now touch upon the ways and means of achieving nuclear disarmament. The issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has for decades remained high on the disarmament agenda in various multilateral forums, as nuclear weapons continue to be a source of concern to the international community. Over the past few years, we have witnessed both gains and setbacks in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

One of the most significant events was the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Its outcome represents the renewed collective commitment of the 187 States parties to the Treaty, which is the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The comprehensive Final Document, adopted by consensus, squarely addressed important issues, such as nuclear disarmament, Treaty compliance and universality and the strengthened review process.

Most importantly, the nuclear-weapon States agreed unequivocally to the total elimination of their

nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, with a number of practical steps for the systematic and progressive implementation of article VI of the Treaty. The future task will be to translate this undertaking into action.

The work of the Disarmament Commission should build upon the outcome of the NPT Review Conference and complement efforts in other disarmament forums to move forward with nuclear disarmament. We are all well aware that nuclear disarmament is a highly political issue. This was evident from the voting patterns on all relevant General Assembly resolutions on which consensus failed to be reached and from the adoption of conflicting resolutions. In the light of the complexity and delicacy of the nuclear disarmament process, my delegation believes that a practical, step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament is very necessary.

Furthermore, my delegation believes that the nuclear-weapon States can make further efforts to reduce their nuclear weapons, including through the START process, and to increase transparency. We also support the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). In this context, we welcome the high-level Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, to be held in New York this September. My delegation is also of the opinion that negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty should commence without further delay, and without conditions.

Regarding the paper of the Chairman of Working Group I, we are of the view that it could have outlined in a more focused way the important changes that have taken place in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation since the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978. Such an overview would enable us to draw out meaningful elements for the conclusions and recommendations section of the paper.

Let me now turn to confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. The primary goal of confidence-building measures is to reduce the risk of armed conflict among States by diminishing mistrust, misunderstanding and miscalculation. Confidence-building measures, especially when applied in a comprehensive manner, have the potential to significantly enhance peace and stability, and to eventually lead to or facilitate disarmament.

The Disarmament Commission has been making substantial contributions to building global norms in the field of conventional weapons. Despite its nature as a deliberative body, it has adopted several guidelines: guidelines on conventional arms control, in 1999; guidelines for international arms transfers, in 1996; and guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security, in 1993. My delegation has been supportive of these guidelines, as they establish agreed ground rules for confidence-building in the field of conventional arms.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms represents an important first step towards transparency in conventional arms, and we therefore support the continuation of this endeavour and encourage more member States to participate in the scheme with sincerity.

Confidence-building measures should encompass a plurality of approaches, and should include both military and non-military dimensions. The non-paper of the Chairman of Working Group II can serve as a good basis for further deliberation. The uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons sows the seeds of new conflicts and exacerbates ongoing ones, seriously undermining confidence-building efforts among neighbouring countries. In this regard, my delegation notes with satisfaction that the draft programme of action on small arms and light weapons encompasses some elements encouraging participating States to enhance transparency by exchanging information relating to marking systems and export-import data.

Now I would like to draw the attention of the Disarmament Commission to recent developments in our region, Asia.

I am very happy to report that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Republic of Korea co-hosted a conference on the applicability of OSCE confidence- and security-building measures in North-East Asia, which was held in Seoul two weeks ago. This conference explored the possibility of applying OSCE's experience to North-East Asia. Its objective was to enhance understanding of multilateral security cooperation in the OSCE region, as well as to focus on perspectives for information- and experience-sharing between OSCE and Asia, notably in the fields of confidence-building

measures and confidence- and security-building measures within the framework of cooperative and comprehensive security.

The holding of the first joint OSCE-Korea conference was a valuable opportunity, at this time of change in the security environment of North-East Asia, to enhance common awareness of the necessity of addressing security challenges through regional security cooperation. Even if the OSCE model may not be perfectly applied to the promotion of confidence-building in all parts of the world, it will no doubt serve as a useful reference point from which many valuable lessons can be learned. I am sure that the outcome we achieved through the OSCE-Republic of Korea conference on confidence- and security-building measures will provide valuable lessons for the future confidence-building process on the Korean peninsula as well.

The Disarmament Commission has taken up some very important issues on the international disarmament agenda. Indeed, the two issues before us today carry great significance for global peace and security. I would like to reaffirm that my delegation will play a constructive role throughout our deliberations. We will give our full cooperation and support to the Commission in the hope that it can make useful contributions to the promotion of peace and security by devising practical confidence-building measures for a new era.

Mr. Guani (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): We congratulate you, Madam, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission at this session and we wish you every success.

The Millennium Declaration was a timely call to work for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. At present, it is fashionable to speak of a "strategic understanding" as a way of justifying a necessary balance. This understanding, rather than being aimed at the goal of this Commission to find ways and means to achieve an effective reduction of weapons, is a covert acceptance of the diversion to the military sector of resources that should be earmarked for economic and social cooperation, thereby depriving those sectors of resources to fund social programmes urgently needed in the developing world and, indeed, in the developed countries.

With the passage of time, it has become ever more obvious that the structures maintained by the persistence of a mentality which paralyses all innovative action in this sphere have become obsolete. The reduction and elimination of weapons of mass destruction cannot be conditioned by factors alien to the general interest of society, particularly those that promote short-term national interests to the detriment of the interests of people living below the acceptable minimum level of well-being.

It is inconceivable that the most destructive weapons ever created should still be on alert 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. The nuclear era should finally be laid to rest. We cannot perpetuate such a threat in this century. Non-nuclear-weapon States — the majority of the international community — cannot allow this situation to drag on indefinitely and irresponsibly.

The problem of disarmament is manifest at various levels. Small and light weapons are monopolizing a great deal of effort in the negotiations to eliminate illicit trafficking, which have reached a critical phase. We all entertain the hope of a successful Conference in July in New York, the major elements of which were outlined a few days ago at the third session of the Preparatory Committee. In these negotiations, however, and in others on disarmament, we still await the emergence of a true commitment that all major military Powers should be willing to undertake.

In the meantime, we in the Common Market of the South have already adopted concrete measures and take pride in having declared our countries to be within a zone of peace. With this, we offer a concrete example of a position contrary to any attitude expressing a culture of violence. It is with the establishment of confidence-building measures adapted to regional realities that less ambitious but very significant goals can be attained.

My delegation is concerned by the ongoing lack of agreement on how to initiate such measures. Models that may succeed in some regions do not always respond to the needs and realities of others. Such regional approaches should not hinder the establishment of a multilateral, comprehensive system of confidence-building measures, which is one of the tangible contributions that could be made at this session of the Conference. In this respect, we congratulate the Chairperson of Working Group II,

Mrs. Martinic of Argentina, for her efforts to draft a text of possible recommendations and for her serious and constructive work to draft a text for adoption next year.

I should point out that much has been done in Latin America on the establishment of confidence-building measures. In the inventory of such measures undertaken by the competent regional bodies, Uruguay has implemented 230.

Uruguay cannot but express its concern at the maritime shipment of radioactive wastes through the South Atlantic and the South Pacific. In a joint communiqué of 21 December 2000, the Governments of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay reiterated their concern to the Governments of France, Japan and the United Kingdom about these shipments along the Cape Horn route, given the vulnerability of our ecosystems and the threat such shipments pose to them. This call was reiterated recently in Santiago at the twentieth meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Rio Group.

We need to continue working in the context of the competent international organs to strengthen the security norms in the transportation of radioactive materials. These efforts should take into consideration the non-pollution of the marine environment, the exchange of information on chosen routes, the communication of emergency plans in case of accident, the commitment to recover radioactive materials in case of shipwreck and the importance of having effective accountability mechanisms in force.

Ms. Ibraimova (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, allow me on behalf of my delegation to congratulate you warmly, Madam, on your election and to express the hope that, under your guidance, we will have a constructive and fruitful session of the Commission.

The outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the upcoming United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; and the agenda of the Disarmament Commission at its current session allow us to look to the future of optimism.

With regard to the problem of nuclear disarmament, we wish to emphasize questions linked to the creation and strengthening of nuclear-weapon-free zones. In that context, one of the important areas in which work is being done in Kyrgyzstan has to do with the process of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. An important role in the successful implementation of that initiative is being played by the Consultative Meeting of Experts of the Central Asian Countries, whose meetings are held regularly under the auspices of the United Nations. Those meetings include the Bishkek meeting held in 1998, which largely helped to define the form and content of a future agreement on a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala and the entire Department for Disarmament Affairs for the tremendous assistance they are lending us. We are convinced that the creation of such a zone will be one of the most realistic ways of supporting peace and security in the region, and that it will be an effective means of achieving nuclear disarmament once and for all. This is the position of Kyrgyzstan, and has been since the beginning of work on an agreement.

Turning to the question of effective disarmament policy, we must examine and take into account the environmental costs linked to the problems of storing nuclear waste. This is a very sensitive issue for many countries, given its political danger and serious environmental consequences for the population. We call for the cooperation of all States and international organizations that can provide technology and experts in the field to clean up and dispose of radioactive substances.

It is difficult to overemphasize the importance of the question of confidence-building measures and conventional weapons. We would like to point out the increased threats to Central Asia stemming from international terrorism and the illegal trafficking in drugs and weapons. These negative phenomena are a threat to the global trend towards strengthening peace and progress. They also undermine fragile new democracies and, on the whole, are a threat to our general efforts to build a more secure and safer world.

Kyrgyzstan is convinced that regional efforts to build confidence can contribute to the establishment of confidence-building measures as a whole. The Treaty on Collective Security within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the work with the Shanghai Five are not only a marvellous example of regional cooperation in the field of security, but also an illustration of the ability to complement existing disarmament mechanisms at the global level.

In this connection, we wish to point out the initiative taken in Kyrgyzstan to hold a dialogue between the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The basic goal of that dialogue is to work out long-term joint measures to confront security challenges faced by OSCE and OIC member States, to strengthen mutual understanding and trust between States and to support a dialogue and mutual assistance between civilizations.

In our view, the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference on Small Arms has illustrated the growing understanding of the fact that the illicit trafficking in, and stockpiling of, small weapons is a serious threat to the population. There is every reason to think that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will be an important step forward towards establishing a global consensus and will give impetus to the work of the Disarmament Commission.

We would like to point out the important role of the United Nations in multilateral negotiations and in nuclear and conventional disarmament. The work of the United Nations in the field of disarmament is an integral component of international stability and security. Kyrgyzstan's position on this issue remains unchanged.

Mr. Hoang Chi Trung (Viet Nam): At the outset, I would like, on behalf of the delegation of Viet Nam, to convey to you, Madam, our warmest congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of this important body. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. I am fully convinced that, under your able guidance, our work will achieve a successful outcome. I would like to express our deep appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Javad Zarif, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for his valuable contributions to the work of the Commission at its last session. The delegation of Viet Nam is also very grateful for the devoted efforts of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, and those of his team.

Viet Nam recognizes the important role of the Disarmament Commission as a deliberative organ holding regular and in-depth discussions on disarmament and security issues. The work of the Commission facilitates the negotiations on disarmament instruments. The two items on the agenda of the Commission this year are of great relevance to the reality of our world today, and, as this is our second year of discussion of these two items, the outcome will have an important bearing on our work as a whole. At this meeting, my delegation wishes to offer a few comments on the two items on the agenda, with a view to facilitating the common work of the Commission in the two Working Groups.

First and foremost, with regard to ways and means to promote nuclear disarmament, my delegation wishes to underscore its strong support for the call made by the heads of State and Government in the United Nations Millennium Declaration for the convening of an international conference to identify measures to eliminate weapons of mass destruction. Without any prejudice to our strong support for the convening of a fourth special session devoted to disarmament to deal with the issue of disarmament in all its aspects, Viet Nam firmly believes that an international conference on weapons of mass destruction is timely and can be a good vehicle towards agreed measures to free our world from all nuclear weapons, as well as other weapons of mass destruction.

Viet Nam has always consistently supported international and regional efforts to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We fully share the view, stated in the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament, that in the field of disarmament and arms control, priority must be given to nuclear disarmament. In this context, the continued retention of a huge number of nuclear warheads and efforts to produce even greater numbers of such lethal weapons or to enhance their destructive capacities are unjustifiable on any grounds. It is a matter of urgency for the world community, and for the United Nations in particular, to make greater and more concerted efforts to promote the total elimination of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems by negotiating and concluding an international convention to ban all such weapons.

It is of great significance to us to reaffirm the conclusion of the International Court of Justice, delivered in July 1996, that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

Likewise, the Commission should welcome the positive outcome and the Final Document of the last Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to the undertaking of eliminating all their nuclear arsenals in particular. Although nuclear disarmament efforts have had their ups and downs in the past, we nevertheless strongly believe that concerted efforts should be made to have the nuclear-weapons States fulfil this commitment without any further delay.

Bearing in mind the complexities and obstacles in the way of total nuclear disarmament, our delegation supports the nuclear disarmament proposals put forth by the New Agenda Coalition. We share the view that such interim measures should be taken to pave the way towards our goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Amongst these initiatives, we believe that the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the negotiation and conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty and measures to de-alert and deactivate nuclear weapons are the most urgent items on the nuclear disarmament agenda.

In that context, we wish to stress that Viet Nam shares the grave concern of the world community over the possible negative impact of the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile systems and the pursuit of advanced military technologies capable of deployment in outer space, which could contribute to further erosion of an international environment favouring the promotion of disarmament and the strengthening of international security. Viet Nam welcomes the commitment made by States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) at the last NPT Review Conference to strengthen and preserve the integrity of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty), and therefore urges that the States parties to that Treaty strictly abide by its provisions. My delegation will deal with the item entitled "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament" in greater detail when we speak in Working Group I on behalf of the countries members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), to introduce a working paper jointly produced by that group.

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to touch upon the item entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", which is another of the substantive items on the agenda of the Commission this year. Viet Nam supports the initiation of practical confidence-building measures as a way to facilitate reductions in conventional arms and the prevention of conventional arms build-ups, thus making a tangible contribution to the strengthening of peace and stability in the world and in individual regions. We congratulate the Chairperson of Working Group II on the production of a non-paper on this item. In our humble opinion, the non-paper creates a good framework for discussion and negotiation of truly comprehensive guidelines on practical and effective confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

Confidence-building measures are surely not substitutes for disarmament measures but, if carefully nurtured and strictly observed, they will facilitate and promote the process of arms limitation and disarmament. It is our view that, in order for confidence-building measures to be effective, they must be created on the basis of agreement by all Member States. As a matter of principle, confidence-building measures, as a prerequisite for their enhancing confidence among States, must uphold the fundamental principles of international law, in particular those enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

We fully share the view that, in order to be successful, all confidence-building measures, both global and regional, should be applied on a voluntary and reciprocal basis and should be incremental in nature. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, for instance, has been a significant success, in the sense that the major importers and exporters of the seven types of conventional weapons have supported it in a consistent manner. Viet Nam has regularly provided the required information to the Register because it believes that the Register is a good global confidence-building measure, which enhances confidence among Members of the United Nations in this field. Viet Nam strongly holds that efforts should be taken to encourage wider participation in this important mechanism before any expansion is considered.

As far as regional confidence-building measures are concerned, our delegation is of the view that they should take into full account the specific conditions and needs of the regions concerned. Successful confidence-building measures from one region can be a good reference for other regions but they cannot be

applied in an automatic way in disregard of the concerns and security environments of specific regions.

As a member of ASEAN, and currently holding the chairmanship of the Standing Committee of that group as well as the chairmanship of the ASEAN Regional Forum, Viet Nam strongly supports the efforts of countries of the region to formulate practical confidence-building measures in all areas. We support the step-by-step approach being promoted in the Regional Forum in this field as the best way to enhance peace and stability in the region. Viet Nam also welcomes the contributions made by the major players in the Forum and by international organizations, the United Nations in particular, to seminars on security and disarmament issues under the auspices of those organizations.

In conclusion, I wish to underline our sincere hope that the Commission will make a great deal of headway on the two important substantive items on its agenda at this very important session so that our work next year will be accomplished and so that guidelines will be sent to the General Assembly for consideration and adoption.

Mr. Onishchenko (Ukraine): At the outset, Madam, let me, on behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, extend our warmest congratulations to you on your election as Chairperson of the Disarmament Commission at its current session. We are confident that your skilful guidance and the interested participation of all delegations will make this session productive and meaningful. We wish also to thank your predecessor, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, Mr. Javad Zarif.

The Disarmament Commission has played an important role as a deliberative forum in the United Nations disarmament machinery and has forged a consensus approach to many significant and sensitive issues. At the present stage, we should explore all possibilities to demonstrate the Commission's effectiveness in dealing with such outstanding problems as ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

Ukraine's contribution to disarmament is widely recognized. Since the last session of the Disarmament Commission, some important events have taken place in Ukraine in the field of arms control and disarmament. In particular, the agreement on adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding relating to the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty), signed at New York in 1997, have been ratified. Recently, the last inspection in the framework of the Treaty on Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF Treaty) was conducted on Ukraine's territory, thus closing one of the important chapters in my country's disarmament story.

It is no wonder, therefore, that Ukraine is among the strongest and most consistent supporters of the efforts aimed at achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world, although we realize that the way to that goal cannot be easy and straightforward. To reach that goal, we need the good will of nuclear-weapon States and patience, perseverance and pressure from all countries, their civil societies and their citizens. We are convinced that further deep reductions in nuclear weapons are of crucial importance now to confirm the validity of the results achieved by the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which were unanimously praised last summer in this body.

Among the other main tasks to which we feel we have to draw specific attention during this session of the Disarmament Commission, I would highlight the following: resuming the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty and establishing a subsidiary body for substantive discussion of nuclear disarmament issues; the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); and the future of the START process in relation to the viability of the ABM Treaty.

We also believe that the multilateral discussion of nuclear disarmament could encompass such topics as reasons for possessing existing numbers of nuclear weapons, an overview of today's deterrence concepts, the role to be played by tactical nuclear-weapon, transparency of nuclear weapons inventories and measures to promote the irreversibility of weapons reduction.

We acknowledge with satisfaction that the Chairperson's paper has already assembled a rich set of relevant information, and the Disarmament Commission will hopefully be in a position to elaborate conclusions and recommendations during this session

and the next. We also welcome the efforts of the Chairpersons of the Working Groups.

It is a well-known fact that expenditures for the acquisition of conventional armaments amount to almost 80 per cent of the global military budget. Therefore, conventional arms control is equally important to ensure lasting international and regional peace and security. In this context, one should mention the Stockholm Document and Vienna Document regimes, which constitute comprehensive confidence-building measures and promote cooperation in military matters in the area of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). These documents form the basis of confidence-building measures on conventional arms in Europe. To meet the new challenges associated with the widespread proliferation of illicit traffic in and easy access to small arms and light weapons, last year the OSCE adopted its Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Ukraine supports this Document, and now our Government is considering ways and procedures to implement its provisions effectively and in the fullest manner possible.

At the same time, we realize that a comprehensive solution to small arms and light weapons-related problems is impossible without serious consideration of the political, military, social and economic situations in countries concerned, and that their legitimate defence and security needs should be taken into account as well. For its part, Ukraine is exercising a consistent and responsible policy with regard to the supply of military goods to the international market. We respect and are in full compliance with existing moratoriums on arms supplies to certain regions and countries of the world.

The surplus weapon destruction undertaken in some countries deserves our full appreciation and approval, although it seems necessary to elaborate criteria for the applicability of the term "surplus". Technical and financial assistance for the collection, withdrawal from illegal circulation and elimination of small arms and light weapons is critically important in many cases. The successful outcome of the 2001 United Nations Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects corresponds to the vital interests of all nations, while confidence-building measures should constitute a critical element in its final product.

Ukraine remains interested in working in the Disarmament Commission and other arms control and disarmament forums to achieve the total elimination of all nuclear weapons and to limit the number of conventional weapons to the minimum levels required for self-defence, and we hope that this session will give further momentum to the ongoing international efforts in these directions.

The Chairman: We have concluded our list of speakers for this morning. We will resume this afternoon to hear the remaining 13 speakers in the general exchange of views.

I extend the appreciation of the Chair to those delegations that responded to the appeal for prompt attendance at this morning's meeting. I look forward to a more enthusiastic response this afternoon.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.245

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission
245th meeting
Tuesday, 10 April 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Ms. Quarless ..... (Jamaica)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

General exchange of views (*continued*)

Mr. Coutts (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like first of all to congratulate you, Madam, on your election to the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission at its current session. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

I should like at the outset to say that my country considers that this Commission plays a special role as a deliberative body of the multilateral disarmament machinery. The issues with which we will again be dealing during this session — nuclear disarmament and confidence-building measures — will again require a constructive spirit on the part of all. The opportunity to develop those themes in depth, together with the universality of the composition of this Commission, are essential elements that we must exploit.

Chile holds firm convictions with regard to disarmament and security. They are based on the guiding principle of human security and on the indivisibility of international security and its pre-eminence over the requirements of individual States. As we have said in other forums, national security does not exist in isolation and cannot be invoked to undermine the security of others.

Having said that, and in the context of nuclear disarmament, we should like to draw attention to the impasse in the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

As we said when we presided over the Conference, while there is a collective responsibility to pursue the objective, that responsibility is obviously not equally distributed among all States. We must therefore again express our conviction that the countries that have opted for armament and nuclear deterrence have a much greater responsibility. It is in that vein that we also regret the marked inclination towards unilateralism by the principal international protagonists.

However, we can place some hope in the outcome of the most recent Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in particular the unequivocal commitment formulated by the nuclear-weapon States to move towards the total elimination of stockpiles. We consider it necessary to stress that the actions and rights arising from the Treaty constitute, for all parties, a clear programme of action to achieve total abolition. We in no way wish to continue to accept an international order based on the perpetuation of the right of a small number of States to possess those arms.

That is why we insist on the validity of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice in underscoring the obligation to undertake in good faith and conclude these negotiations under strict international control.

Lastly, we join all those countries that defend the validity of and the need to observe the principle of the irreversibility of nuclear disarmament and the control of these and related weapons.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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With respect to confidence-building measures, we wish to point out that, in our region — and in our subregion, the southern cone, in particular — these have greatly helped to forge a climate of friendship, good-neighbourliness and growing physical and economic integration. We must also stress, however, that those measures are based on shared values.

In effect, within the framework of the Organization of American States, as demonstrated in the Declarations of Santiago and El Salvador on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures — later reaffirmed in the Plan of Action of the second Summit of the Americas, held in Santiago in April 1998, and in the political declaration establishing a zone of peace in the Common Market of the South — it is ineluctably evident that there is a need to strengthen and defend representative democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms, the rule of law and of good governance, transparency, social progress and the protection of the environment as essential elements in safeguarding peace and security in the hemisphere.

Regarding the projection of confidence-building measures in our subregion, we feel it important to underscore, reiterating what was said by the representative of Argentina yesterday, that our two countries have benefited since 1994 from the implementation of a number of such measures. They have allowed the launching of an integration process unprecedented in our lengthy shared history. Among them, one example to be highlighted is the standing security committee created in 1995 to enhance bilateral cooperation in those areas, with the joint participation of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Defence of both countries.

In general, the implementation of confidence-building measures in the area of defence depends on the parties' having sufficient political will to find points of convergence beyond national objectives that may clash with one another and to overcome antagonistic cultural attitudes and perceptions. As long as such measures promote neighbourly and regional stability, we can also build mutual confidence in areas that are similarly amenable to the adoption of such measures, such as the economy and political relations. In this context, we should also like to congratulate our colleague from Argentina, Mrs. Martinic, Chairperson of Working Group II, for the rapid drafting and distribution of the working document. We believe that it is an excellent basis for the development of our deliberations.

In conclusion, allow me to express our complete readiness to cooperate to ensure that the Commission will produce the results we all expect.

Mr. Dausá Céspedes (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Madam, on behalf of the delegation of Cuba, for your well-deserved election, especially as you represent a brother Caribbean country to which we are joined by bonds of friendship. My congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau.

I also wish to recognize the excellent work done last year by Mr. Javad Zarif, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as Chairman of the Commission.

We are satisfied by the swift response to the situation created as a result of the problems experienced by the regional Group that was to assume the chairmanship of the Commission this year, which was resolved thanks to the speed with which the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States produced a suitable slate to assume that responsibility. We hope that, in the future, the regional Groups will continue to make every possible effort to select candidates to the chairmanship when it is their turn, in accordance with the principle of geographic rotation.

The final outcome of the deliberations on the two substantive issues on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission will depend to a large extent on the progress we achieve during this session. For Cuba, nuclear disarmament is and will continue to be the supreme priority in disarmament, as has been agreed by all Member States for over 20 years.

In practice, the Disarmament Commission is currently the sole deliberative forum in which all States Members of the United Nations participate to discuss issues associated with the specific ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament. We cannot afford the luxury of wasting this opportunity. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has not even been able to agree on a programme of work for the past four years.

In such circumstances, it is particularly important that deliberations on the nuclear issue on our agenda be aimed at adopting concrete recommendations on how to advance towards nuclear disarmament. The Commission cannot become a mere academic forum

detached from the realities of the world. The achievement of consensus cannot be an objective in itself, but must rather be a means to arrive at tangible solutions to the real problems that exist today in the sphere of nuclear disarmament. In order to do this, however, we need above all the political will of all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States.

It is illogical that some, alleging that the cold war has ended, should question the top priority that nuclear disarmament continues to enjoy, given that there are more than 35,000 nuclear weapons threatening the very existence of humanity and that obsolete doctrines of security based on the possession of such weapons continue to thrive.

While, on the one hand, the nuclear Powers undertake unequivocally — in theory — to adopt practical measures to advance towards nuclear disarmament, in the real world those promises have yet to be fulfilled. Of even greater concern, the practical actions that have been undertaken contradict the commitments assumed. Suffice it to mention just a few examples.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is maintaining and developing its New Strategic Concept, which increases, rather than decreases, the role of nuclear weapons in its security planning. Despite the clear opposition of the international community, it insists on the establishment of a national anti-missile defence system, in flagrant violation of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems. This would reopen the door to an arms race, including in outer space.

A special committee on nuclear disarmament with a mandate to carry out negotiations has still not been established within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, despite the numerous resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in that regard.

It is increasingly clear that there is a lack of political will on the part of some States to heed the appeal made in the Millennium Declaration to convene an international conference on nuclear disarmament.

Global military expenditures are again increasing at an accelerated rate. Following the 2.1 per cent increase in military expenditures in 1999, to $780 billion, a significant number of developed countries have already committed themselves publicly to maintain a constant rate of increase in their military budgets during the coming years. Only a portion of that money would serve to meet the needs of the 1.3 billion human beings who today live in the most inhuman sort of poverty.

At the same time, the qualitative development of nuclear arms continues unabated and the production of conventional weapons grows — the latter becoming ever more sophisticated and deadly. This growth is aimed at meeting political, military and commercial needs that have nothing to do with legitimate national security interests.

My delegation would like to express special thanks for the work done between sessions of the Disarmament Commission by Ms. Gabriela Martinic, the Chairperson of Working Group II, on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. We are particularly gratified to have had her revised working paper at our disposal for several weeks now.

As that paper clearly sets out, specific ways of promoting confidence-building measures cannot be imposed; for while they may work quite well in certain countries and regions, they may not necessarily work in others. It is therefore fundamental to take adequate account of the individual characteristics of the context in which such measures are applied. Moreover, the development and implementation of confidence-building measures also assumes strict respect for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including, in particular, the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of a State, respect for sovereignty, non-use or threat of use of force, the peaceful resolution of disputes and the right to self-defence.

Little progress can be made towards establishing true confidence without eliminating the military threats and hostile and aggressive policies to which some States are subjected, or if military doctrines devised to intimidate other countries continue to be in force.

We believe that the revised working paper drafted by the Chairperson of Working Group II is an important step forward in our work that may serve as a good basis to guide discussion.

Allow me to conclude by reiterating to you, Madam Chairperson, the firm support of the delegation of Cuba for your work, as well as our full readiness to

contribute constructively to the success of this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Alemán (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, as a member of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, to express to you, Madam Chairperson, my great satisfaction at seeing you preside over our work. Your dedication and experience will make it possible for us to make progress in the right direction. I wish to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I would also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for the valuable opening remarks he made yesterday. Finally, I would like to add the voice of my delegation to those that have expressed gratitude for the work carried out last year by Mr. Javad Zarif, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iran.

The lethal invention of nuclear weapons coincided almost exactly with the founding of the United Nations. The race in nuclear and conventional arms has accompanied the growth of our Organization. If we consider that it was not just Governments but peoples that expressed in the San Francisco Charter their resolve to save future generations from the scourge of war, then we can understand why almost since its inception the United Nations has dedicated its main efforts to the obligatory task of disarmament in order to achieve its basic goal of safeguarding international peace and security.

It is clear that disarmament will not be achieved overnight, and that therefore it will have to be achieved gradually. But disarmament cannot be limited to half measures or isolated measures that do not affect the major players. That would be tantamount to promoting disarmament only among the disarmed. It is for this reason that at the Millennium Summit our heads of State and Government insisted on the need to attain the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, and nuclear arms in particular. It is also the reason why they decided to keep all options open for the attainment of that lofty goal.

Although that is still a distant goal, important steps have been taken to put an end to the proliferation of nuclear arms and ban completely all types of nuclear tests. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones and zones of peace have also made valuable contributions to disarmament. Nevertheless, the relevant treaties establishing legally binding obligations still have not entered into force. I am referring to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

In addition, it is regrettable that, due to the paralysis in the work of the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva, it has not yet been possible to establish ad hoc committees on nuclear disarmament and fissile materials. Likewise, the fragile strategic balance that exists between nuclear-weapon States continues to be source of concern — a situation that poses the risk of setting off a new and unwanted nuclear arms race.

Given this uninspiring scenario, and despite the fact that this is merely a deliberative body, the Disarmament Commission has become a useful forum in which to build consensus in various areas of disarmament. It is in that same constructive spirit that we should now focus on the items that have been on its agenda for the last two years, namely, practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms and ways and means of achieving nuclear disarmament.

The delegation of Ecuador appreciates the patient efforts made to facilitate our discussions by the Chairpersons of Working Groups I and II. The non-paper drafted by Ms. Martinic of Argentina for Working Group II is an excellent foundation for making progress in the relevant agreements.

With regard to confidence-building, I would like to point out that Ecuador has already adopted bilateral measures with its two neighbouring States. At the regional level, Ecuador supports all inter-American instruments, and at the global level it respects the commitments undertaken within the Organization. In that connection, Ecuador has just transmitted to the Secretariat details of the legal measures it has adopted to prevent and curb any activity prohibited by the Ottawa Convention on Anti-personnel Mines.

Permit me in conclusion, Madam Chairperson, to assure you of our complete cooperation in ensuring that the work of the Commission is crowned with success.

Mr. Manalo (Philippines): Please allow me to begin, Madam, by offering you our warm congratulations on your election to the chair. I believe that under your able guidance, and aided by your wisdom and long experience on disarmament matters,

we will achieve much progress on the two important substantive issues before us. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

I would like also to express our appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for sharing his reflections on the history and special context of the Disarmament Commission. As always, his statement served to put things in perspective and helped us start our work in a more focused manner.

Our own perspective is heavily influenced by the fact that experts have placed major flashpoints in today's world in my region, all of them with a decidedly nuclear dimension. Some of these flashpoints are in our immediate subregion of East Asia. Our perspective is also affected by the fact that all of the final nuclear test explosions in the last decade of the past century were conducted in my region.

When we include in our perspective the facts that there are still massive stockpiles of nuclear weapons and that military and defence policies continue to revolve around nuclear doctrines, coupled with recent developments that may have implications for the strategic nuclear balance, we are convinced that progress is our only option when the Commission revisits the issue of nuclear disarmament.

Nevertheless, there has been some progress in our quest for nuclear disarmament. The Millennium Summit reaffirmed the importance of eliminating nuclear weapons. The obligations enshrined in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) were reinforced during the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, when States parties undertook an unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament and to taking practical steps in a systematic and progressive effort towards the abolition of nuclear armaments. As we continue our work in this Commission, we should build on those achievements.

We would like to thank the Chairman of Working Group I, on nuclear issues, Mr. Yaw Odei Osei of Ghana, for his excellent paper. His paper provides an outstanding basis for our work, and already we see the determination of many delegations to contribute to his paper. For our part, we would like to emphasize the following elements that should remain important parts of his paper: the early entry into force of and universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which the Philippines ratified this year; the maintenance of unilateral nuclear-test-ban commitments; the reinvigoration of the work of the Conference on Disarmament towards a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons; the establishment in the Conference on Disarmament of a subsidiary body on nuclear disarmament; the realization of the obligation recognized by the International Court of Justice to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control; and the ratification of protocols to existing nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties.

With those elements in mind and recognizing the importance of reflecting the international consensus in favour of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the Philippine delegation will actively participate in the Working Group on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament.

This year we will also continue our work on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. In that regard, we are thankful to the Chairperson of Working Group II, on that issue, Ms. Gabriela Martinic of Argentina, for her revised paper and for her extensive efforts in consulting delegations on that paper. Her paper contains many of the elements that we believe are essential to confidence-building initiatives, and we believe that our work will be greatly aided by her efforts.

Our work on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms should build on the recognition that conditions and circumstances vary in each region and that each region has developed different approaches to this issue. However, fundamental principles should continue to guide us. One principle is that the excessive accumulation of conventional arms does not contribute to building confidence. Another is that the deployment of conventional forces in areas of tension or territorial disputes where there has been an understanding that parties should refrain from engaging in activities that might destabilize the situation could delay efforts at confidence-building. Thus, our work should reflect the need to move forward in recognizing the importance of confidence-building measures, which could include conventional disarmament or transparency measures, in order to create an atmosphere of trust, confidence and cooperation, where the possibility of the resort by States to the threat or use of force in international relations is reduced or eliminated.

The members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have taken a major step in building confidence in our region. In 1994, during the annual meeting of its Foreign Ministers, ASEAN established the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to foster constructive dialogue and consultation on political and security issues of common interest and concern and to make significant contributions to efforts towards confidence-building and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region. In the years since its establishment, the ARF has proven to be an effective consultative forum for promoting effective dialogue on political security cooperation in the region.

I believe that our discussions on confidence-building will prove to be an important and unparalleled opportunity for members of the international community to share their own unique bilateral or regional experiences on confidence-building. We look forward to a lively exchange of ideas and experiences and are confident that we shall all benefit from this exercise.

In closing, Madam Chairperson, please allow me to pledge to you the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We congratulate you, Madam, on your election to the Chair of the Disarmament Commission, and we wish you every success in your noble work.

The current session of the Disarmament Commission is taking place in a truly remarkable period for the United Nations. The decisions of the Millennium Summit and the Millennium Assembly created genuine preconditions for strengthening the central role of the United Nations in international affairs and for a significant enhancement of the world Organization's potential to regulate international relations and to coordinate cooperation in a multi-polar world. Today, through common effort, we must implement the decisions of the Millennium forums. That imperative can be fully applied to the sphere of disarmament. The Millennium Summit and the Millennium Assembly gave a powerful impetus to multilateral efforts in that area. The outcome of those efforts will provide a response to the central question of whether the twenty-first century will be a century of real disarmament.

The central place in the multilateral disarmament process still belongs to the United Nations, and in particular to its Disarmament Commission. In Russia's view, the Commission constitutes an important format for multilateral dialogue on key items on the international disarmament agenda.

What are the principal priorities in this area? Russia firmly believes that collectively ensuring strategic stability in the world is an essential condition for the stable and progressive development of the disarmament process. Today the notion of strategic stability is becoming ever more multidimensional, comprising a whole range of political, military, economic, humanitarian and ecological components. We are open to the broadest and most purposeful dialogue, including in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament, concerning the choice of optimum ways of ensuring strategic stability.

Russia considers the total elimination of nuclear weapons one of the final goals of the disarmament process. We favour stage-by-stage, comprehensive movement in the sphere of nuclear disarmament, with the preservation of strategic stability and the participation of all nuclear Powers. The 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) defined specific steps in the field of nuclear disarmament. Fully aware of its responsibilities as a nuclear Power, Russia intends to implement the provisions of the Final Document of the Conference.

A new, specific step forward in strengthening the non-proliferation regime was the statement made by Vladimir Putin of Russia at the Millennium Summit on an initiative in support of the sustainable development of mankind and radical solutions for nuclear proliferation and environmental problems. We were pleased with the support given to this initiative at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly and the forty-fourth session of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference. We attach great importance to the activities of the recently created task force on innovative nuclear reactors and fuel cycles. We feel it is necessary to pool the efforts of all countries concerned under the auspices of the IAEA in the framework of a relevant international project.

The specific programme of action in the field of nuclear disarmament formulated in President Putin's statement of 13 November 2001 measures aimed at strengthening strategic stability, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Russia is prepared to make further deep cuts in strategic defensive arms. We cannot see any reasons why there should be any obstacles to this. As a realizable objective for the radical reduction of strategic nuclear warheads in Russia and the United States, we propose to cut their levels down to 1,500 units for each party. This is not the limit. We are prepared to consider even lower levels.

In the current strategic situation in the world, the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty plays a special role. Its signing in 1972 paved the way for the limitation and reduction of strategic offensive arms by the two greatest nuclear Powers. This process was made possible through the obligation the Soviet Union and the United States assumed under the Treaty to renounce deployment of national anti-missile systems or the development of the basis for such systems. The ABM Treaty still remains a cornerstone of strategic stability and a basis for further reductions of strategic offensive arms, as reflected in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

The destruction of the ABM Treaty because of the United States' plans to deploy a national missile defence system would seriously affect global stability and international security. Only if the ABM Treaty is preserved and respected in its present form will it be possible to proceed with the reduction of strategic nuclear weapons in the framework of the START III process. Russia, which ratified START II in 2000, is prepared to open negotiations on a new START III treaty without delay.

Russia believes that priority should be given to political and diplomatic solutions to the problem of the nuclear threat. We have put forward an initiative to create a global missile and missile technology non-proliferation control system. The Russian proposals to this effect have won wide international support, as can be seen from the results of the international experts meetings on a global control system held in Moscow this year and last year, during the course of which it was found advisable to consider this issue under United Nations auspices. The preparation by the Secretary-General, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/33 A, of a report on the missile issue in all its aspects, to be discussed by the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session, also serves this purpose. We attach great importance to the work to be done by the group of government experts in order to assist with the drafting of the report.

Russia regards possible the creation, as appropriate, of non-strategic region-wide ABM systems to neutralize and counter missile threats. Such systems could be created on a multilateral non-bloc basis, with the involvement of all the States concerned. We are all ready to cooperate in this field with all interested countries.

For us, as before, there is also the priority task of not allowing nuclear weapons into space. This is one of the most important factors for preserving international strategic stability and international security. The idea of the non-militarization of space enjoys the broad support of the international community and finds virtually unanimous political expression in General Assembly resolutions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

An international conference on the prevention of the militarization of outer space, to be held in Moscow on 11 to 14 April 2001, offers great opportunities for building joint efforts by States concerned regarding the possible transformation of outer space into an area of military confrontation. This event is being held on the initiative of the President of Russia and is dedicated to the fortieth anniversary of the first manned flight in space.

We hope that the forum will give new impetus to discussions in the Conference on Disarmament on multilateral efforts for the establishment of a special committee on space with a negotiating mandate. Russia calls for the early development of an international legal regime that would prevent an arms race in space, prohibit the proliferation of weapons in space and ensure the observance of the principle of not using or threatening to use force from outer space. However, this work should in no way prevent other States from having access to the peaceful benefits of space.

Russia has always been committed to the disarmament process and to the strict fulfilment of its obligations in this area. Russia's ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a specific example of this approach. Once again, we call upon other States — primarily the United States — on which the entry into force of the Treaty depends, to follow our example, thus allowing this important document to become universal nature and put an insurmountable barrier in the way of any attempts to proliferate nuclear weapons. Russia continues consistently to implement

unilateral initiatives in the sphere of tactical nuclear weapons.

We strongly believe that the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world plays an important role in narrowing the geographic range of the presence of nuclear weapons. We welcome and encourage in every way possible this process, which would ultimately help us reach the goal of a nuclear-free world. In this respect, we feel it is appropriate to recall Russia's proposal that nuclear weapons should be concentrated within the territories of the nuclear States.

The United Nations is called upon to become one of the leading centres for discussing the problems of conventional arms. On the whole, we have a positive assessment of the functioning of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as a confidence-building instrument. We see its primary task as tracking possible destabilizing stockpiles of conventional arms. The Register is a global instrument that provides for the involvement of participating States on a voluntary and non-discriminatory basis. At the same time, radical measures to improve or change it could upset the balance of interests of many participants in the Register. Excessive transparency can damage the security of States and lead to a narrowing of the Register's geography, thereby reducing its effectiveness. That is why it is necessary to adopt a deliberate and balanced approach to increasing the level of transparency, which is not an end in itself and is designed to facilitate confidence-building in the military sphere.

Russia favours the development of broad international cooperation in curbing the illicit traffic in conventional arms, small arms and light weapons in particular, including through the interaction of national law enforcement, customs and licensing agencies. We believe that it would be appropriate to raise the question of the need to improve national legislations and regulations in the field of arms export control and to undertake possible further steps in the field of control in line with existing mechanisms. The latter include the Vienna and Wassenaar accords and the results of relevant activities within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and of government expert groups on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and on small arms and light weapons.

Moscow appreciates the fact that the United Nations Conference to be held this July is devoted to the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons as the most urgent and pressing of issues. We hope that the Conference will facilitate the development of international cooperation in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We believe that the early entry into force of the adapted Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, a cornerstone of European security, will prove to be a contribution to strengthening this security. The process of ratifying this accord should be free from artificial delays and procrastination.

Russia attaches great importance to the scrupulous implementation of the 1999 Vienna Document and is prepared for the further improvement and development of confidence- and security-building measures within this accord. We feel that it is expedient to use the OSCE experience in strengthening confidence- and security-building measures in other regions of the world.

Finally, I wish to emphasize that Russia attaches great importance to the successful work of the Disarmament Commission. The session's agenda contains complex but exceptionally important disarmament issues. So far, there has been no unity in national approaches to these issues, but there is real potential for their significant rapprochement. The Russian delegation will continue its work to achieve this goal.

Mr. Khalid (Pakistan): It is a special pleasure for the Pakistan delegation and for me personally to extend our warm congratulations to you, Madam, on your well-deserved election as Chairperson of the Disarmament Commission at its 2001 substantive session. You can rest assured of the Pakistan delegation's full cooperation and support in making the session a success.

I also take this opportunity to convey, through you, our deep appreciation for the excellent work done by Dr. Javad Zarif as the Chairman of Disarmament Commission at its 2000 substantive session.

As we enter the intermediate year of our three-year discussions on the substantive agenda of the Disarmament Commission, it is important for all of us to reiterate the importance we attach to this forum. Established at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Disarmament

Commission remains the sole deliberative forum on disarmament issues. The Commission also derives its importance from the fact that it is a multilateral forum on disarmament with universal membership. Countries big and small, powerful and weak, and with a variety of differing security concerns and agendas participate as equals in this forum to establish norms and principles which can help further promote objectives of disarmament.

The Disarmament Commission has a proud record of achievements over past years to prove its effectiveness and utility. Member States participating in the Commission have, through complex negotiations, drafted guidelines and recommendations which, though not legally binding, are of indispensable value in the evolution and strengthening of agreed norms of conduct for States in the areas of international security and disarmament. It is a measure of the Commission's effectiveness that, in the past few years, as the multilateral disarmament agenda has reached an impasse, it has produced two sets of guidelines in the vitally important areas of nuclear-weapon-free zones and conventional arms control, with particular emphasis on the consolidation of peace.

If we keep in perspective these past successes and the intricacies and demands of reaching consensus in a forum with universal membership, we can surely make tangible progress in fulfilling our mandate. At the same time, it is of equal importance that member States shun the temptation to show excessive zeal in overburdening the work of the Disarmament Commission or introducing elements which are extraneous to our agenda.

The first item on the agenda, dealing with ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament, is both timely and important. The consideration of this agenda item acquires even greater importance in view of the many setbacks suffered by the global disarmament agenda in the recent past. There is a growing feeling that this global nuclear disarmament framework is being eroded. Contrary to the high hopes generated at the end of the cold war, nuclear weapons retain their primacy in the security policies of the powerful States, while international politics take a more difficult and complex course. The possible abandonment of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems could well result in the unravelling of the agreements underpinning the whole system of multilateral disarmament.

We earnestly hope that, unencumbered by the demands and pressures of negotiating a legally binding instrument, our discussions on the agenda item will be more objective and fruitful. My delegation cannot approve of attempts to equate nuclear disarmament with non-proliferation. An excessive focus on non-proliferation cannot mask the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament. As such, restricting the discussions on the first substantive agenda item to the so-called framework of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will not be acceptable to my delegation. If there is any framework needed, it is provided by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

In the context of South Asia, history proves the reactive nature of Pakistan's nuclear programme. It was our neighbour in the East that introduced the nuclear factor into the South Asian security equation. We regret that South Asia went nuclear in spite of our serious efforts to prevent this. India's nuclear tests left us with no choice but to carry out our nuclear tests.

Pakistan wishes to seriously tackle the problems bedevilling peace and security in South Asia, especially the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. We are mindful of our responsibilities in a nuclearized South Asia. Instead of a triad of nuclear forces, Pakistan seeks a triad of peace, security and progress. To this end, Pakistan has offered to India the resumption of high-level talks between India and Pakistan to discuss and resolve the core dispute over Jammu and Kashmir; a strategic restraint regime involving measures for nuclear restraint and conventional balance; and high-level interaction for the promotion of trade, transit arrangements, development cooperation and investment generation.

My delegation looks forward to participating in discussions on agenda item 2 constructively and with an open mind. In the second year of discussions on this item, the Disarmament Commission should aim for a more detailed conceptual discussion on the entire variety of known confidence-building measures. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that symptomatic treatment and ad hoc recipes do not yield durable results. It will be important to distinguish between the disease and the symptoms, and to

acknowledge that confidence-building measures are not an end in themselves.

Discussions about confidence-building measures bring out the fact that they are region- and situation-specific. What has worked in one place need not be applicable elsewhere. No one model is complete in itself, nor can it be applied to any region in isolation from its geopolitical environment. We would thus caution against a prescriptive approach or an approach which attempts to universalize the confidence-building measures negotiated and agreed in the context of one specific region.

In conclusion, Madam Chairperson, my delegation once again assures you and the Bureau of its fullest cooperation in making our deliberations successful.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me start by congratulating you, Madam Chairperson, on your assumption of your duties to preside over this important body of the United Nations. I am sure that your diplomatic skill, coupled with the professional assistance of the Secretariat, will ensure a successful session for the Commission.

In no era of history have such collective efforts been under way to define and structure global and regional security arrangements. Today, all aspects of security issues are high on the international agenda and are widely deliberated and discussed by all States. The United Nations, which is a universal body established primarily to prevent the scourge of war, provides the best forum in that context for all States to deliberate upon common security and disarmament issues. In the same spirit, following the termination of the cold war, the United Nations has conducted discussions and negotiations at different levels that have resulted, in some respects, in preventing and restraining the arms race, thereby contributing to the enhancement of peace and security all over the world.

In that framework, the Disarmament Commission has served best to define and adopt relevant and essential guidelines related to different aspects of disarmament, which has led to a better common understanding of the evolving dynamic of international relations with regard to disarmament. It has also helped States to have a clearer vision of the foundations of the new international environment. The Commission's agenda this year, which is a continuation of the previous year's agenda, contains both highly relevant and substantive items for deliberation.

Nuclear disarmament is among the most essential issues, and a top priority within the whole international security and disarmament agenda. The devastating effects of the threat and use of nuclear weapons are now more than ever a source of major concern. The world community can in no way afford to witness a catastrophic incident of the use of such weapons, which can destroy mankind's civilizations. Practical measures and steps are therefore needed to abolish nuclear weapons at the earliest.

It is unfortunate that the expectations that existed at the end of the cold war were not fulfilled and that, to the contrary, some developments led some States to resort to old cold-war doctrines of balance of power and terror based on the capability to destroy an adversary. Nuclear disarmament, a lofty goal of humanity, is now perceived by some as only a utopia and a state beyond our reach. This is totally in contravention of the principles and objectives of the disarmament charter of 1978 and other instruments, decisions and guidelines of different organs of the United Nations — including the General Assembly — that through numerous resolutions have called for the adoption of specific measures to increasingly de-emphasize the role of nuclear weapons and to destroy them under effective international control. In this connection, both the new confrontation over missile defence schemes and the introduction of an arms race into outer space are a matter of great concern and have consequences for the strategic stability and negative effects on disarmament treaties, negotiations and initiatives.

Following intensive deliberations, the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was able to agree, on the basis of article VI of the Treaty, on a framework containing certain specific measures towards nuclear disarmament. This awaits implementation. The Conference also made important decisions and contributions regarding regional initiatives, particularly with respect to the special situation in the Middle East and the nuclear threat of Israel. Through that decision, the international community expressed its concern over unsafeguarded nuclear facilities in the region.

Now the unequivocal commitment of all nuclear-weapon States to abolish nuclear weapons should be seen as an important and tangible undertaking for nuclear disarmament, which requires the adoption of practical measures, particularly by nuclear-weapon States. The Commission's agenda item entitled "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament" is therefore highly appropriate for full and extensive deliberation at this juncture. The Commission is expected to contribute to this crucial and vital international security question by introducing practical steps to achieve nuclear disarmament. The high standing within the United Nations of this body — which, as the specialized universal deliberating forum on disarmament issues, provides for the participation of all States and which takes its decisions by consensus — can help it contribute effectively to the advancement of nuclear disarmament.

The second substantive item on the Commission's agenda this year, "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", is another area of great importance. In many instances, conflicts and tension between States have been exacerbated by the increasing flow of conventional arms into the regions in question. The introduction of sophisticated arms, particularly into sensitive regions of the world, has in several instances caused miscalculations and has resulted in long-term conflicts. In certain cases, increased conventional arms capabilities have caused the emergence of a new cycle of the arms race in the field of conventional weapons at the global and regional levels.

Moreover, mistrust and suspicion create an atmosphere of insecurity among States within regions and lead States to resort to accumulating arms because of that suspicion and to protect their national interests, as well as for self-defence. The interrelationship between building confidence and reliance on conventional arms is therefore an essential element which needs to be taken into consideration in the process of consolidating peace and initiating efforts to contain crises and tensions and to prevent them from becoming deadly warfare.

More recently, particularly within the micro-disarmament field, some aspects of conventional arms and the role of confidence-building measures have been highlighted and have been the subject of broad-based universal deliberations. Small arms and the illicit traffic in such arms are now the focus of the international community's attention; about a week ago, in this very room, States Members of the United Nations adopted the report of the Preparatory Committee for the forthcoming United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects. Practical confidence-building measures are one of the main elements of the wide range of identified practical measures required to curb illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Confidence-building measures have also been highlighted in various United Nations resolutions related to regional disarmament and security initiatives; it would be useful to look at all of these with great care and interest.

The Disarmament Commission needs to take stock of measures identified in appropriate areas related to conventional arms and to use them as valuable resources to structure its guidelines and principles governing the introduction of confidence-building measures in this domain.

Since last year, under the guidance of the Chairpersons of its two Working Groups, the Disarmament Commission has embarked upon identifying and deliberating on various aspects of its two substantive agenda items, on nuclear disarmament and on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. I take this opportunity to thank the Working Group Chairpersons and to congratulate them on their hard work and on the papers they introduced to structure the discussions. This year, I am sure we will go further in providing a sound basis for furthering the work in those two areas. Here, Madam Chairperson, I believe your diplomatic experience and the active participation of all members of the Commission will be important assets helping us to achieve our purposes at this session.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): My delegation congratulates you, Madam, on your election to the Chair of the Disarmament Commission at its 2001 session; we are convinced that your able guidance will direct our discussions to a successful conclusion at this session.

The two substantive items that the Disarmament Commission has been discussing in depth since last year are important and relevant. They are "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms". The recommendations that the Commission will make next year at the conclusion of

its three-year-long discussion will indeed be of great value to all Member States in framing their policies on disarmament, both nuclear and conventional.

The efforts made towards achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament have been characterized by ups and downs. Notwithstanding this, the history of nuclear disarmament is not without concrete results. The sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was able to produce a consensus final document which set out a number of practical ways to achieve nuclear disarmament. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is being signed and ratified by an increasing number of countries. The historic Millennium Summit provided clear guidelines with respect to striving for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. We should leave no stone unturned in acting in the millennium spirit, and we should endeavour to build on the success of the NPT Review Conference. In that vein, the nuclear-weapon States should fulfil the undertaking they made during that Conference to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

The progress achieved so far in the field of nuclear disarmament is far from satisfactory. There are still some countries that are not parties to the NPT; their inclusion would strengthen the global non-proliferation regime. The Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral United Nations negotiating arm in the sphere of disarmament, has been paralysed for more than three years, and has failed to agree on a programme of work. Negotiations on important treaties such as a fissile material cut-off treaty, on preventing an arms race in outer space, et cetera, have been stalled. START II has not been implemented. The CTBT has not been ratified by the 11 more countries whose ratification is required for the Treaty to come into effect.

Under such circumstances, the role of this session of the Disarmament Commission becomes more important. Frank discussions, which are the hallmark of the Commission's sessions without the constraints of a treaty-negotiating framework, can prove very useful in narrowing differences and in paving the way towards concrete results and valuable practical recommendations. The Disarmament Commission is the forum that is most accessible to all Member States. It is where each and every United Nations Member can candidly deliberate issues of both nuclear and conventional armaments. Member States can identify ways and means to promote nuclear disarmament and can discuss any issues conducive to the emergence of consensus.

The outcomes of the Commission's last few sessions have been impressive. The 1999 session in particular was able to produce a set of guidelines concerning the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which have proved very useful in drafting relevant resolutions in the First Committee of the General Assembly.

No less importance can be attached to the conventional arms issue in the light of the devastating impact the use of such weapons has created, resulting in the massive loss of human life. During the cold-war era, an estimated 5 million people died because of armed conflicts involving conventional weapons. It is little wonder that the Millennium Declaration mentions the problem of small arms and light weapons as an issue that poses as serious a challenge to the security of humankind as do nuclear weapons.

Considering this reality, the theme the Disarmament Commission has chosen for discussion — practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms — seems only appropriate. Confidence-building measures are very effective tools both for preventing conflicts and for building peace in post-conflict situations. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is an innovation in this area. This Register needs to be expanded and deepened to enhance its effectiveness. A standardized reporting instrument for military expenditures can make very useful contributions to promoting transparency and then building confidence among States.

Confidence-building measures can indeed be beneficial in the fields of both nuclear and conventional armaments. It is in this context that we appreciate the endeavours undertaken by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific at Kathmandu, which recently organized an annual meeting devoted to "Prospects for future confidence-building".

The significance of the Disarmament Commission should never be underestimated. It always provides a useful forum to the general membership of the United Nations to discuss thoroughly the disarmament issues before the international community. Since its establishment in 1952 the Disarmament Commission

has been giving valuable and practical recommendations to facilitate negotiations among States to enter into bilateral and multilateral treaties for arms control. It is only hoped that the current session will be another major step in that noble task.

Mrs. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan): Allow me to add my congratulations to those already addressed to you, Madam Chairperson, on your election as Chairperson of the 2001 session of the Disarmament Commission and to express my confidence that under your skilful leadership substantive progress will be made in dealing with its two agenda items. I would also like to extend our felicitations to other members of the Bureau of the Commission on their election to such honourable posts.

Availing myself of this opportunity, I would also like to thank Mr. Javad Zarif, Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, for his relentless efforts aimed at the success of the Commission's work, and also thank Under-Secretary-General Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala for his comprehensive statement covering all major aspects of the Commission's activities.

The Disarmament Commission at its current session will continue discussions on the two agenda items "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", having at our disposal two working documents that provide a good basis for conducting constructive and productive deliberations. In this regard, you, Madam Chairperson, as well as the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups, can fully rely on active cooperation and support from my delegation.

This year the Republic of Kazakhstan will celebrate the 10-year anniversary of its independence. Analysing the past and looking ahead, Kazakhstan is striving to contribute to the work of United Nations, especially in the field of disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the maintenance of global security.

Kazakhstan proved its adherence to the process of freeing the world from nuclear weapons by joining the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1993 as a non-nuclear State. After the withdrawal of the last nuclear warhead from its territory in April 1995, and the elimination of the remaining nuclear device at the Semipalatinsk test site on 31 May 1995, Kazakhstan became a State that voluntarily refused to possess nuclear weapons. This positive contribution of my Republic to the field of disarmament was reflected in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Last year, along with Belarus and Ukraine, we submitted to the Commission a working paper in this regard.

On the other hand, we fully share the idea expressed by Mr. Dhanapala in his statement at the 242nd meeting:

> "And, yet, because the NPT is not yet a universal Treaty, it is vitally important for the world community to continue its determined efforts to discover the ways and means of achieving nuclear disarmament as soon as possible. The Commission has a unique role to play in this regard."

Proceeding from the need to fully strengthen the non-proliferation regime, Kazakhstan signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in September 1996. It is the strong intention of my Government to ratify the CTBT before the forthcoming Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT in September 2001. Nowadays my country practically and systematically participates in the work on increasing the efficiency of control over the observance of the CTBT provisions.

On 29 July 2000, the last nuclear-weapon-test grove number 160, in the Degelen mountains in Semipalatinsk, Kazakhstan, was put out of action. It was the third calibration experiment made on a range as part of a series of Kazakh-American experiments and was simultaneously used for checking and for the calibration of the International Monitoring System for conducting nuclear tests created within the framework of CTBT.

Kazakhstan, attaching paramount importance to the process of maintaining peace and stability at a regional level, and thus at a global level, gives great attention to the realization of the initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. We are confident that such a zone in Central Asia and in other regions will constitute an important step towards strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and promoting general and complete disarmament. Kazakhstan will further continue to participate consistently and constructively in the work carried out to establish this zone.

Pursuing a policy of constructive cooperation, Kazakhstan has created a belt of security and good neighbourliness along its borders. Along with China, the Russian Federation, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, within the "Shanghai 5" framework and through consultation and cooperation on an equal footing, Kazakhstan signed the Agreement on Confidence-building in the Military Field in the Border Areas and the Agreement on Mutual Reduction of Military Forces in the Border Areas.

My country, consistently acting for the creation of security structures on the Asian continent and fully abiding by its commitments to important international instruments, is continuing to work on the implementation of the initiative put forward by the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly in 1992 on the convening of a Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), aimed at strengthening stability and security in Asia and at creating an effective cooperation mechanism.

It is not an easy task, but looking back at the path that has been engaged since 1992, we note with satisfaction that some progress has been made. This initiative is taking real shape now and becoming a tangible factor in contemporary international life. For the information of delegations, I would like to note that the participants of the CICA process are 15 member States, five observer States and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. On the eve of the summit of the CICA heads of State and Government, scheduled for the fall of this year, a new draft of the summit document was discussed at the Special Working Group meeting from 26 to 31 March in Almaty. In June, the second Special Working Group meeting will be held to continue the finalization of the draft.

Given the results of negotiations held in the capitals of the States members of the CICA process, my country believes that the CICA summit document should reflect three major aspects of cooperation: joint activities to combat new threats — mainly terrorism, separatism, extremism, illegal drugs and weapons trafficking; a concept of the regional mechanism for the elaboration and application of confidence-building measures in their broader sense; and the institutionalization of the CICA structure, including a secretariat, regular meetings, financing, rules of procedure and the development of scientific potential. All three aspects are supported by the member States and represent a good basis for elaborating a well-balanced summit document and for implementation in the future.

My country is convinced that the CICA initiative has a rational kernel and calls on the United Nations and the Asian States to continue their support of the CICA process in the interests of Asian and global security.

Transparency in the field of control and the reduction of conventional arms provides a good basis for preventing a destabilizing build-up of weapons in any region or an excessive concentration of weapons in any State. Kazakhstan supports the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. It has provided information on a regular basis since 1992 and considers the Register to be the most important component of such control. We also welcome the broadest participation of States Members of the United Nations in the functioning of this important international instrument.

In considering practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, the Disarmament Commission at the current session should take due cognizance of the preparations for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in July 2001. In this regard, my delegation wishes to support the draft programme of action prepared by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for that Conference. We are of the view that our deliberations at this session should support the draft programme of action without complicating progress.

My delegation reiterates its support for the non-paper on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, proposed by the Chairperson of Working Group II, which is a good basis for our further deliberations.

Finally, I would like once again to assure you, Madam, of our full support for the efforts aimed at ensuring the success of the work of the Disarmament Commission. We are ready to strengthen cooperation with all the delegations of member States to achieve our common goals.

Mr. Osei (Ghana): It gives my delegation great satisfaction to see you, Madam, presiding over the 2001 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. I

therefore wish to congratulate you on your election and to commend the able manner in which you have so far conducted our meetings. Let me also assure you and the other members of the Bureau of our support throughout our session.

Allow me to extend, through you, to the delegation of Iran our appreciation for the good work and effective and efficient manner in which your predecessor, Mr. Javad Zarif, conducted our affairs when we met last year.

As we all anticipated, the statement of the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, was detailed, incisive and indeed thought-provoking, compelling us all to reflect on how best we can contribute to or engage in the work of the Commission as it seeks to influence the disarmament machinery in a meaningful manner that sustains the hope and aspirations of the international community for a world free of weapons of mass destruction and of conventional weapons that threaten or undermine the striving of many people to attain a reasonable and decent standard of development.

These aspirations were heightened by our political leaders when they met in New York for the Millennium Summit and resolved to seek to eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. The Commission, in this regard, can do no less than remain positively engaged in the process of identifying ways and means to achieve disarmament, and also identify confidence-building measures to galvanize the necessary support for the work ahead. In this regard, my delegation feels that we must all eschew complacency and resolve to work assiduously on the basis of our leaders' commitment to ensure progress at the end of this session.

As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Ghana is committed to its obligations therein and considers the positive conclusions of the sixth Review Conference as relevant to the process of achieving nuclear disarmament. For my delegation, the Treaty remains the bedrock of the multilateral disarmament process and the Commission should consider innovative ways of encouraging all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to fulfil their obligations, as stipulated in article VI of the Treaty. These States made an

> "unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament" (*NPT/CONF.2000/28* (Part I), *article VI, para. 15 (6)*)

and the Commission can do no less than urge them to engage in good faith in negotiations towards the attainment of that objective. Thus, in this connection, our deliberations should consider ways in which the Conference on Disarmament, the only multilateral negotiating body for disarmament, can be assisted in reaching consensus on its working agenda and thereby in overcoming its current inertia. We feel that identifying acceptable language on all these elements should indeed help us to make progress in the work of this session.

The menace posed by conventional weapons is another area of concern to my delegation. It is important, as we deliberate, to keep in mind the resolve expressed by our leaders at the Summit to take concerted action to prevent the illegal traffic in small arms and light weapons, especially by creating greater transparency in arms transfers and supporting regional disarmament measures. Having just concluded the preparatory process for the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, my delegation believes that our work now should complement the work done in the Preparatory Committee by highlighting such mechanisms as the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as a way of assuring affected countries or regions of our desire to contribute to national, regional and — hopefully — international initiatives to curb these harmful trends. Consideration should therefore be given to the expansion of the Register to cover all types of conventional weapons, in a bid to engender greater transparency.

Ghana also supports the existence of nuclear-weapon-free zones, the concept underlying their establishment and existence in some regions and the need to explore how to ensure their wider application, on the basis of the principles established by the Commission at its 1999 session. We are particularly heartened to have been informed at this session of the ratification by the United Kingdom of two protocols to the Treaty of Pelindaba. In our view, that is an indication of that country's commitment to the Treaty's wider application and relevance to the disarmament process. Needless to say, this is an initiative that should commend itself to other nuclear-weapon countries.

The revised non-paper by the Chairperson of Working Group I, on agenda item 4, ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament, is recommended as a good basis for a further, and more meaningful, exchange of views on that item. Hopefully, this will ensure progress on that front. My delegation also welcomes the tireless efforts of the Chairperson of Working Group II on agenda item 5, confidence-building measures. We appreciate in particular her efforts to consult widely and to present an informal working paper outlining elements and a structure that will, no doubt, stimulate healthy interaction on the issues. Here, again, my delegation would be happy to proceed on that basis.

The two agenda items for our consideration highlight issues that have a tremendous impact on efforts to maintain international peace and security. My delegation believes that we all have an obligation to build on the commitment of our leaders by engaging actively in the deliberations to sustain the progress that we made at our first session. The Disarmament Commission must continue to prove itself relevant to efforts towards the maintenance of international peace and security.

In conclusion, Madam Chairperson, let me once again assure you of my delegation's cooperation and wish you well in your endeavours.

Mr. Al-Humaimidi (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like first of all to congratulate you, Madam Chairperson, and the new members of the Bureau on your election. We wish you every success in the discharge of your duties. We are convinced, Madam Chairperson, that you will make every possible effort to reach the goals of our substantive session. My delegation would also like to thank your predecessor, Mr. Javad Zarif, for the efforts he made in the year 2000 during the Commission's previous session. I also wish to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, for the statement he delivered yesterday.

This negotiating body is meeting today to examine, for a second year, two essential points: ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. On this occasion, my delegation would like to thank the Chairpersons of the Working Groups — Mr. Osei of Ghana and Ms. Martinic of Argentina — for their efforts in drafting the working papers on the two items under discussion.

Despite the importance of the second item, on confidence-building measures, the first item on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament has special importance, given the extremely severe effects of deadly nuclear weapons and their impact on humanity in general. With regard to the first item, we all agree that the objective of the international community is the total elimination of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. We are convinced that our efforts in that regard should be based on the following.

First is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and in particular its article VI, which provides that every State party undertakes to carry out negotiations in good faith to adopt effective measures to end the nuclear arms race as soon as possible, to carry out nuclear disarmament and to implement a comprehensive disarmament system under strict and effective international control.

Second is the framework established by the Final Document of the 1978 General Assembly special session on disarmament, in which the question of nuclear disarmament was the top priority in the field of disarmament. With regard to efforts that must be made by States and organizations in the area of disarmament, paragraph 50 invites States to begin immediate negotiations to end the qualitative development of nuclear weapons with regard to their manufacture, their delivery systems, and fissile materials for military uses. The same paragraph also invites us to establish a timetable for a programme to achieve as soon as possible a balanced reduction of nuclear arsenals and their delivery systems with a view to the final and total elimination of these weapons.

Thirdly, let me refer to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which was adopted unanimously by all the judges, who represent the world's diverse legal systems. In that opinion, the Court rendered the following decision: that all States have the obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. The Court's advisory opinion backed the Final Document adopted by the General Assembly in 1978 at its tenth special session, which called on all States, especially nuclear States, to commit themselves to undertaking negotiations leading

to a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict international control.

Fourthly, the decisions and guidelines of the Disarmament Commission, in particular its 1999 recommendations, and the resolutions adopted each year by the General Assembly — most recently resolution 55/33 — all make reference to the international community's commitment to the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and to the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Fifthly, I would also make mention of the work of the Conference on Disarmament towards facilitating negotiations on the achievement of complete nuclear disarmament.

Beyond the fact that there are conventions to ban the use of certain kinds of weapons, the conscience of mankind itself prohibits the use of nuclear weapons anywhere. The use of such weapons is prohibited by all religions, whatever their principles or world views. Respect for the supreme worth of the human person must not be jeopardized by the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. That is why disarmament must be a universal human goal; we should do our utmost to save succeeding generations from tragedies like those of the past, irrespective of the reasons and justifications behind them. Nothing can justify mass destruction that does not distinguish between civilians — women, children and the elderly — and combatants. Hence, the best guarantee that we will avoid repeating past tragedies and prevent the future use of these inhumane weapons is to make serious efforts to attain worldwide nuclear disarmament.

The climate of the cold war may have justified, in some people's minds, the manufacture of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. That era is past, but we nonetheless note that some continue blatantly to arm themselves and to pursue policies based on a double standard and selective policies on the implementation of international commitments, and to search for pretexts and justifications to wriggle out of commitments they have already undertaken.

Among the gravest problems facing the world is the double standard applied by certain States: some countries are prohibited from defending themselves against attack by aggressors – attacks carried out in full view of the world; these defenceless countries are forbidden to purchase what they need for everyday civilian life. At the same time, other States are permitted to do what they please, flouting international documents and resolutions; they have free rein to trample upon resolutions that have been adopted, by producing the most sophisticated conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Indeed, those countries establish laboratories and research centres for the production of the most sophisticated and destructive weaponry.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) forbids all States to export nuclear technology to other countries. But what is the situation when nuclear technology is exported to a State that is not a party to the NPT and that refuses to place its nuclear installations and its nuclear weapons under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)? That State refuses to comply with United Nations resolutions and decisions and continues to develop its nuclear arsenal with the assistance of the world's strongest Power.

Iraq attaches great importance to the holding of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and to making a greater effort to reach consensus on the agenda and objectives of that session, especially since we have witnessed great developments in disarmament since the tenth special session, devoted to disarmament, held in 1978. Iraq regrets the inability of the Conference on Disarmament to carry out substantive negotiations on the establishment of an ad hoc committee specifically to consider the complete and final elimination of nuclear weapons.

In this context, Iraq wishes to stress the importance of the creation of zones free of weapons of mass destruction throughout the world and considers this a significant way to achieve global and comprehensive nuclear disarmament. In this regard, my country was among the first to advocate the creation of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, in accordance with the principle of accession to the international treaty banning the manufacture and proliferation of this weapons system.

Despite the accession of the Arab countries to the NPT, Israel remains the only anomalous case in the region, having refused to accede to this Treaty and to submit its installations to verification and control safeguards, despite the fact that it possesses the largest nuclear weapons arsenal in the region.

Given the aforementioned and developments of recent years, we are concerned. Although years have passed since the conclusion of the NPT, gains made until now have been modest and the nuclear States have not adopted any practical measures to implement recent commitments. To the contrary, a nuclear State, the State possessing the largest nuclear weapons arsenal in the world — the United States — continues to reject its binding legal obligations according to relevant conventions and international instruments. It continues to disavow all responsibility under the ABM Treaty and continues to practice nuclear deterrence. It is pursing a much more intense arms race, contrary to the ethics of relations between States and the Charter; we all know that the arms race can only entail destruction, poverty and backwardness for mankind. International conventions and treaties are the basis of the obligations and commitments of States. The principles and norms that States have adopted do not free them from respecting their commitments.

Regarding the second point, the Iraqi delegation wishes to emphasize the following points. First, any proposal relating to conventional weapons should take into consideration the specific nature of each region and its domestic conflicts and should emphasize the principles of the Charter: the sovereignty of States and their territorial integrity, and their right to national self-defence. We note today that the main problem that the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms faces stems from the fact that it is limited, that it relates to seven categories of weapons only and that it does not even cover more destructive weapons. That is why participation in the Register cannot be guaranteed.

With regard to the Middle East region, a special case, there is an absence of qualitative balance in the area of conventional weapons because the application of transparency to the seven categories of conventional weapons — while disregarding other more complex weapons and weapons systems, such as nuclear weapons — is an imbalanced approach which can be described as non-global, and therefore it cannot achieve the Register's original goal. If we need to guarantee transparency with regard to conventional weapons as a means of strengthening international peace and security, we follow basic specific guidelines that are balanced, comprehensive and non-discriminating. Thus, this item should not be separated from other points linked to disarmament, in view of the close relationship and interdependency between the various items on the agenda.

Secondly, as we consider this issue, we must refrain from addressing matters that are unrelated to disarmament, because that could make the situation far more difficult and could complicate our task. That is why we would like proposals to be more realistic.

We should not lose sight of our vision of the future. Our purpose, as stated in the Charter, is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Those generations will never forgive us if we fail to achieve that purpose.

The Chairperson: The representative of the United States has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind delegations that first statements in exercise of the right of reply should not exceed 10 minutes. I call on the representative of the United States.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): Before I exercise my right of reply, I want to congratulate you, Madam, on your assumption of the Chair. I really do not know why chairmen or chairwomen are routinely congratulated on taking on such a difficult task, but I suspect the practice comes from the parliamentary heritage both our countries share. In the old days, Speakers of the British House of Commons were dragged forward to the Chair by fellow members and were often in considerable personal peril when they attempted to carry out their constitutional responsibilities. Fortunately, we live in happier and less perilous times today, and I am quite certain that there are no representatives of the House of Stuart lurking outside the chamber to arrest you, Madam. But in any event, I congratulate you on your assumption of your responsibilities, and I will cooperate with you in every way.

The United States delegation regrets that the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea misrepresented and distorted the policies of the United States when he spoke this morning. In a democratic republic of the kind we Americans are privileged to have, citizens elect their representatives and leaders, and any newly elected United States Government has the duty to review existing policies and proposals to ensure that the nation's business is conducted in the spirit of the mandate that the people have chosen to give it through our constitutional processes.

The new United States Administration is currently carrying out a thorough review of United States policies related to security, defence, arms control and disarmament. Policies of the United States related to international peace and security on the Korean peninsula are included in that review. In close cooperation with the Republic of Korea, we look forward to future discussions with appropriate officials of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at times and places that will be worked out in the future.

Under the circumstances, it appears to us to be inappropriate to call into question or attempt to prejudge the outcome of the United States Government's policy review. It is even more inappropriate to threaten countermeasures that could "have no limit in their scope and depth" (A/CN.10/PV.244). That semantic overkill and those intemperate remarks clearly conflict with the role and responsibility of the Disarmament Commission to promote international peace and security.

The Chairperson: The two Working Groups will begin their work tomorrow morning, and I should like to wish the Chairpersons of the Working Groups, Mr. Osei and Ms. Martinic, every success. I encourage all members to work towards constructive consensus-building as we embark on this next stage of our work.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.246

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

246th meeting

Thursday, 19 April 2001, 10 a.m.

New York

Chairman: Ms. Quarless ..... (Jamaica)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Election of officers

The Chairperson: As representatives may recall, the Commission has not yet elected two Vice-Chairmen from the Group of African States. Since consultations were ongoing, it was decided that we would address the matter at a later stage. I have now been informed that the Group of African States has reached consensus on candidates for the two remaining posts of Vice-Chairmen on the Bureau.

I now give the floor to the representative of Mozambique, Mr. Nuno Tomás, to nominate the candidates.

Mr. Tomás (Mozambique): I am pleased to inform the Commission that after consultations, the African Group has decided to nominate Mr. Ismail Khairat of Egypt and Mr. Jean Philip Du Preez of South Africa as Vice-Chairmen.

As there is no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect, by acclamation, Mr. Ismail Khairat of Egypt and Mr. Jean Philip Du Preez of South Africa to the posts of Vice-Chairmen of the Disarmament Commission.

It was so decided.

The Chairperson: Allow me, on behalf of the other members of the Bureau, to warmly welcome Mr. Jean Philip Du Preez and Mr. Ismail Khairat to the Bureau. I look forward to their good counsel and to their support as they join the Bureau for the remainder of the work of the Commission.

Programme of work

The Chairperson: I invite members to turn their attention to the timetable for the final week of our deliberations, set out in informal paper no. 3. The attention of delegations is drawn to the fact that, on request, the meeting of Working Group I on the afternoon of Tuesday, 24 April, will be held in the Trusteeship Council Chamber instead of in Conference Room 4. Delegations should also note that the Bureau has decided to conclude the work of the Working Groups on the morning of Thursday, 26 April, in order to give the Secretariat time to complete the draft report of the Commission. In the interest of ensuring equity in the number of meetings of the two Working Groups, the Thursday morning time will be divided equally between Working Group I and Working Group II.

Reports by Chairpersons of Working Groups

The Chairperson: I call on the Chairman of Working Group I, Mr. Yaw Odei Osei, to present his report.

Mr. Osei (Ghana), Chairman of Working Group I: Working Group I has had five meetings so far. Our first meeting took place on Wednesday, 11 April. At that meeting I presented my revised non-paper (A/CN.10/2001/WG.I/WP.1), which was really an update of the basic document annexed to the report of the Commission to the General Assembly at its fifty-

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fifth session (A/55/42). On presenting the revised paper to the Working Group, I requested the Group to consider offering new suggestions or proposals relating to the paper. However, on that day there was not much by way of interaction. In the event, the Working Group agreed instead to consider, as a first step, a new draft structure for the outcome document, which I had proposed to the Group. That was the basis of our work on 12 April, and at its second meeting, on that date, the Working Group considered a revised draft structure, and reached broad agreement on it. This is set out in document A/CN.10/2001/WG.I/CRP.1/Rev.1.

At its third and fourth meetings, held on Monday and Tuesday, 16 and 17 April, the Working Group used the Chairman's updated non-paper to begin to reconsider elements in the non-paper under the new draft structure, on which broad agreement had been reached at the earlier meeting. At my invitation, delegations made both oral and written proposals outlining new elements, clarifying existing ones and recommending the relocation of some elements of the Chairman's non-paper within the framework of the new agreed draft structure. One of the reasons for adopting that procedure was to allow delegations to assist the Chairman to prepare a structured compilation of all written submissions and oral statements.

On Wednesday, 18 April, at our fifth meeting, I presented for the Group's further consideration the compilation, structured under the new headings to which the Group had agreed. This was simply the gathering of similar ideas under appropriate rubrics, indicating the countries responsible for submissions and the sources of the various elements, including General Assembly resolutions. I must emphasize that this excluded any value judgement whatsoever on the part of the Chair. As we began to look at the new document (A/CN.10/2001/WG.I/CRP.2), I emphasized that it did not represent a text for negotiation. At that meeting, I merely encouraged additional suggestions or comments, both oral and written, on the elements under the various structural headings. The approach which we adopted yesterday will be continued this morning, at the sixth meeting of the Working Group, to be held after the adjournment of the present meeting of the Disarmament Commission.

I hope to come out with a Chairman's working paper tomorrow on the basis of the clarifications, proposals and presentations made at yesterday's and this morning's meetings of Working Group I. That working paper will be based on the compilation and the relevant comments that have been made on it. But, of course, I must add that I will probably have to exercise some degree of discretion and judgement to try to marry, under the various sub-headings, ideas that are similar, that are closely related to one another or that, in the Chair's judgement, convey the same thrust. The Chair will try in that exercise to be as even-handed, comprehensive and balanced as possible. Of course, in the exercise of such good intentions, the paper will remain my sole responsibility.

I would anticipate that our work on Friday and on Monday through Wednesday of next week will be to look at the Chairman's working paper in greater detail and to come to some understanding about its shape, for attachment to the final draft report of the Commission at this session.

The Chairperson: I thank the Chairperson of Working Group I for his report and for the document he has circulated for the attention of delegations.

If delegations have no comments on the report of the Chairperson of Working Group I, I invite the Chairperson of Working Group II, Ms. Gabriela Martinic, to present her report.

Ms. Martinic (Argentina), Chairperson of Working Group II (*spoke in Spanish*): Following the suggestions of delegations, Working Group II started its work with a meeting devoted to a general exchange of views, and we continued with a first reading of the non-paper, chapter by chapter, getting as far as chapter III, related to practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. During the reading, numerous valuable suggestions have been made to improve the non-paper, and several points have been raised that will require further discussion and elaboration in order to accommodate the concerns of all. We hope to conclude the reading of the non-paper over the next few days and to have an opportunity to hold a preliminary exchange of views on the recommendations, which, undoubtedly, will clarify the content to be included in the chapters.

In this regard, I would like to highlight and express appreciation for the constructive participation, flexibility and goodwill of all delegations to face the challenging task we have ahead.

In summary, I believe we are moving in the right direction, without haste but without delay, and that next

year we will be in a position to conclude our three-year cycle with a product that will be satisfactory to all.

The Chairperson: I thank the Chairperson of Working Group II for her report.

I open the floor to delegations for comments on the report of the Chairperson of Working Group II.

Mr. Morino (Japan): I also thank the Chairperson of Working Group II for her explanation of all the work that has been done so far.

I would like to pose just one very simple question. Is it the intention of the Chairperson of Working Group II to produce a compilation of all proposals or ideas presented in Working Group II, as is the procedure in Working Group I?

Ms. Martinic (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like, through you, Madam Chairperson, to thank the representative of Japan for his question. Indeed, in the Group we have discussed the possibility of having a compilation of references to various documents related to confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, as well as references to meetings on this item. Some delegations have made contributions. However, in our exchange it was obvious that delegations will require a certain amount of time to be able to give me the material and for me to be able to present this compilation.

That is why I feel the most appropriate thing in this Group is to demonstrate a certain amount of flexibility, so that delegations will have enough time to submit their material, particularly bearing in mind that the disarmament agenda is quite heavy this year and that delegations also have a series of obligations, the most important one this year being the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. That is why we feel that the best approach would be to adopt a flexible stance, as I said. I feel that this compilation could be distributed during our inter-sessional period.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.247

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission
247th meeting
Friday, 27 April 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Ms. Quarless ..... (Jamaica)

The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

Reports by Chairpersons of Working Groups

The Chairperson: We will start the final meeting of the 2001 substantive session with agenda item 6, namely, the adoption of reports of the subsidiary bodies on the various agenda items, as well as consideration and adoption of the draft report of the Commission, as contained in documents A/CN.10/2001/CRP.2, CRP.3 and CRP.4/Rev.2. In accordance with our agreed working timetable, we will first consider and adopt the report of the Commission and thereafter hear concluding statements by delegations.

To start the process of the consideration and adoption of the reports of the subsidiary bodies on individual agenda items, I would like to call on the Chairpersons of each Working Group to introduce the report of his or her group.

If there are no comments about this procedure I shall proceed to give the floor to the Chairman of Working Group I, on agenda item 4, "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament", the representative of Ghana, Mr. Yaw Odei Osei, to introduce the report of this Working Group, which is contained in document A/CN.10/2001/CRP.3.

Mr. Osei (Ghana), Chairman of Working Group I: In my capacity as the Chairman of Working Group I, it gives me great pleasure to present to the Disarmament Commission this morning the draft report of Working Group I, on agenda item 4, entitled "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament". This report, which is before the Committee, is contained in document A/CN.10/2001/CRP.3/Rev.1 and is dated 26 April 2001.

Working Group I held a total of 10 meetings, during which it exchanged views both orally and in writing and heard proposals and comments on all the papers that I submitted, namely, a revised non-paper, a draft structure of the outcome document, a compilation of the comments and proposals and, finally, a Chairman's working paper based on the aforementioned compilation that also took into consideration the written and oral submissions. I must also mention that a number of delegations presented working papers as well. Those are listed in paragraph 2 of CRP.3/Rev.1.

While I am happy to report that the texts of the Chairman's paper will be the basis of our work next year, I emphasize that it has been issued on my sole responsibility and does not in any way represent a negotiated position or command any consensus. But, reflecting on the Group's deliberations over the past three weeks, I believe we have made some progress, albeit step by step. In my view, this should hardly be surprising, given the nature of the subject matter that we have considered and the desire to ensure that any distances gained are well measured and well covered.

I believe the draft report speaks for itself and therefore needs no further clarification or explanation. Suffice it to add that, as agreed in paragraph 8 of the draft report, my inter-sessional consultations, which will precede the revision of my paper, will be based on

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the preliminary comments that were made during our first reading by delegations.

In this regard, I am also sensitive to the fact that there have been inquiries about the timing of the release of the revised paper. At this stage, I can say only that I shall endeavour to have it issued in reasonable time before the 2002 session of the Disarmament Commission.

Judging from the reactions of delegations, which I took note of after our meeting yesterday, the Group's work next year will be challenging. Indeed, I am reminded of the conversation between the hen and the pig. As I recall the story, in response to the hen's proposal that they have eggs and bacon for breakfast, the pig said, "For you, it is a matter of just laying the eggs; for me, it is a matter of life or death". Negotiation will always be hard. But it will also remain the art of demonstrating flexibility to reach compromises that are not life-threatening.

Having said that, nothing remains for me to do but to thank all delegations, not only for their presence at our meetings but also for their constructive comments, which facilitated the Group's work.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the officers of the Secretariat, notably Mr. Timur Alasaniya of the Disarmament and Decolonization Organs Servicing Branch of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, who served as Secretary of the Working Group. I must also mention Ms. Tatyana Shestakova and Ms. Lidija Komatina, of the same Branch, whose assistance was invaluable in that regard. I should also like to mention Ms. Mika Murakami and Mr. Valére Mantels of the Department for Disarmament Affairs, who served as advisers to the Group.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the Secretariat staff of the documentation room and desk, who ensured that all the relevant documents and papers were available and easily accessible to delegations. I thank them for their courtesy and friendliness. Last but not least, I wish to acknowledge the quiet but effective presence of our language interpreters, who are unseen but heard, and who made it possible for us to understand each other as we worked. On behalf of the Working Group, I wish to commend them for their support.

Finally, Madam, your election as Chairperson provided an opportunity for me to strengthen the working relations that I have had with you in the past. Working with you was, indeed, my pleasure.

The Chairperson: I thank the representative of Ghana for his report.

If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group I on item 4, as contained in document A/CN.10/2001/CRP.3/Rev. 1.

The report was adopted.

The Chairperson: I would now like to move on to the report of Working Group II, on agenda item 5, entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", as contained in document A/CN.10/2001/CRP.4/Rev.2.

I give the floor to the Chairperson of Working Group II, Mrs. Gabriela Martinic, representative of Argentina, to introduce the report.

Mrs. Martinic (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to introduce to the Disarmament Commission the report of Working Group II on agenda item 5, entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms". The report is contained in document A/CN.10/2001/CRP.4/Rev.2.

Working Group II held 11 meetings between 11 and 26 April. During that period, after a general exchange of views, it considered the non-paper I presented on 16 March. It also held a preliminary exchange of views on possible recommendations.

As reflected in paragraph 4 of the report, delegations made numerous and valuable oral and written proposals, and three working papers were presented. The delegation of Nepal has informed me that it has presented a working paper, which is being distributed, as stated earlier in the Committee of the Whole.

Working Group II also had the opportunity to hear an enlightening presentation by Mr. Nazir Kamal of the Department for Disarmament Affairs regarding the activities carried out by that Department and its regional centres on confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms and indications of possible future tasks that might be entrusted to them. That presentation will certainly contribute to the

formulation by the group of practical recommendations, as has been requested.

Finally, the Working Group's report, adopted by consensus yesterday, mentions the work that delegations and I will have to carry out before the start of the 2002 substantive session of the Commission.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to all delegations for their active and constructive participation. Our work took place in an excellent atmosphere of openness and mutual respect, even when opinions differed on various aspects. It is my profound hope that at the end of our three-year cycle, Working Group II on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms will be in a position to make a small but nonetheless important contribution to a better understanding and comprehension among us all.

Before concluding, I should like to express my gratitude to Mr. Nazir Kamal, Mr. Saijin Zhang and Ms. Shenaz Nagji for their efficiency, professionalism and great patience with me, as at times I have been a little tense and anxious. I should also like to acknowledge the interpreters and conference officers for their cooperation, friendliness and helpful attitude. I should like thank the members of the Secretariat for their assistance in facilitating our work, especially the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Timur Alasaniya, and his assistant Ms. Lidija Komatina, who, year after year, provide us with their tireless assistance and experience. My thanks also go to the other members of the Bureau for their encouragement and confidence in my work.

Finally, I should like to express to you, Madam, my admiration and pride — admiration for your diplomatic skills in conducting our work with a firm hand and a constant smile, and pride because through you our region has once again demonstrated its continuing contribution to bringing about the world imagined by those who wrote the Charter, the world of which we continue to dream.

The Chairperson: I thank the representative of Argentina for her report, for her very kind words to me and for her continued support throughout the past three weeks.

Does any delegation wish to comment on the report of Working Group II?

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): My delegation wishes to express its pleasure that the promise has been kept to distribute document A/CN.10/2001/WG.II/WP.3, a working paper entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", by my delegation. As that document is valuable for all delegations, I wanted to flag the point that the venue of the four important meetings devoted to confidence-building measures that were organized by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific was Kathmandu, which is the headquarters of the Regional Centre.

The Chairperson: In the absence of any further comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group II, on agenda item 5, contained in document A/CN.10/2001/CRP.4/Rev.2, as orally amended.

The report, as orally amended, was adopted.

The Chairperson: Now that we have adopted the reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission, I would like to thank the Chairs of the two Working Groups for their stewardship. The Commission is deeply indebted to them for their exemplary leadership in guiding the deliberations of the Working Groups on two very complex issues. I am particularly gratified at the support they have extended to the Chair of the Commission over the past three weeks.

We will now begin our consideration of the draft report of the Disarmament Commission, as contained in document A/CN.10/2001/CRP.2. I have the pleasure of giving the floor to the Rapporteur of the Commission, Mr. Ko Ko Shein of Myanmar, to introduce the draft report of the Commission.

Mr. Shein (Myanmar), Rapporteur of the Disarmament Commission: It is my honour and distinct pleasure to introduce to the Disarmament Commission the draft report of the Commission at its 2001 substantive session, as contained in document A/CN.10/2001/CRP.2. The draft report consists of four chapters: "Introduction", "Organization and work of the 2001 substantive session", "Documentation" and "Conclusions and recommendations".

Let me now turn to the text of the draft report and draw the attention of delegations to section III B, "Other documents, including documents submitted by Member States". A new paragraph will be inserted

following paragraph 23 in the light of the submission of working paper A/CN.10/2001/WG.II/WP.3.

As customary, the final draft report is a factual description of the Commission's work and proceedings during the session. The substantive part comprises the reports of the two Working Groups, which were just adopted by the Commission and which will form part of the present draft report. This part is a reflection of compromises and agreements reached by delegations through delicate negotiations carried out in a spirit of constructive cooperation.

On agenda item 4, "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament", I would like to say that dialogue on this complex issue took place within the context of the Disarmament Commission. The Commission, with its deliberative mandate, allows practical and action-oriented considerations, as well as broad expectations and conceptual approaches to the issue.

On agenda item 5, "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", the Chairperson presented a non-paper to which delegations, in the course of their deliberations, contributed actively.

The reports of the two Working Groups, although not to the full satisfaction of delegations, will certainly serve as a basis for further discussions.

I wish to take this opportunity to say that it has been a privilege and an honour for me to serve as Rapporteur at this session, and particularly to work under the able leadership of our Chairperson, Ms. Diane Quarless. It was an enriching experience to participate in the work of the Bureau together with the Vice-Chairmen and the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups, who provided effective and expert guidance for our deliberations.

Finally, allow me to extend my gratitude to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for the counsel and support that he provided to the Bureau and to member States. I would also like to express my special thanks to the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Timur Alasaniya, to the secretaries of the Working Groups, and to all the other members of the Secretariat for their tireless efforts and kind assistance as we worked towards a successful conclusion of the 2001 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

With those brief remarks, I have the honour to recommend that the Commission adopt the draft report as contained in document A/CN.10/2001/CRP.2.

The Chairperson: Now we shall consider the draft report of the Commission, chapter by chapter.

As there are no comments on Chapter I, "Introduction", paragraphs 1 and 2, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt those paragraphs.

Paragraphs 1 and 2 were adopted.

The Chairperson: We turn next to Chapter II. Are there any comments on Chapter II, "Organization and work of the 2001 substantive session", paragraphs 3 to 13?

Mr. Salander (Sweden): I regret that I did not spot this earlier, when we went through the draft report informally, and I shall not insist on this amendment. But let me direct attention to paragraph 7, and suggest that we use the same formula there as we used in the various working papers:

> "Sweden (on behalf of the European Union, with the associated countries aligning themselves)".

The Chairperson: Paragraph 7 will be so amended.

As there are no further comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt paragraphs 3 to 13 as orally amended.

Paragraphs 3 to 13, as orally amended, were adopted.

We will now take up Chapter III, "Documentation", paragraphs 14 to 24. Are there any comments on this chapter?

Delegations are invited to note that with the insertion of the new text reflecting the submission of the delegation of Nepal, the final paragraph, 24, becomes paragraph 25, and acknowledgement of Nepal's contribution is inserted as paragraph 24.

As there are no further comments, I will take it that the Commission wishes to adopt Chapter III, paragraphs 14 to 25, as orally amended.

Paragraphs 14 to 25, as orally amended, were adopted.

Delegations are now invited to comment on Chapter IV: "Conclusions and recommendations", paragraphs 26 to 29. Delegations should take note that the numbering of paragraphs in this chapter is amended to be consistent with the changes in the previous chapter.

As there are no comments, I will take it that the Commission wishes to adopt Chapter IV, paragraphs 26 and 29, as orally amended.

Paragraphs 26 and 29, as orally amended, were adopted.

Having adopted all paragraphs on the draft report, may I take it that it is the wish of the Commission to adopt the draft report of the Commission, contained in document A/CN.10/2001/CRP.2 as a whole, as orally amended?

The draft report, as orally amended, was adopted.

Concluding statements

Mrs. Arce de Jeannet (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to say a few words, on behalf of the Mexican delegation, to express our satisfaction with the progress made at this session of the Disarmament Commission on the two substantive agenda items. We hope that constructive dialogue will be pursued during the intersessional period to enable us to make considerable progress in the pending work of both Working Groups.

I wish to say a few words on behalf of the delegations of Latin America and the Caribbean present, to express our deepest appreciation for the manner in which the work has been guided by you, Madam Chairperson, and by the two Chairpersons of the two Working Groups, and to express our thanks for the assistance given by the Secretariat, both from the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services. We would like our appreciation recorded at this session.

Mr. Sharma (India): Greetings to you, Madam Chairperson, and to the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups for the manner in which you have conducted the proceedings this session. Considerable work has been done towards identifying the issues concerned and seeking common ground, while differences remain to be reconciled and more work is required before we can come to documents that might enjoy consensus.

My delegation's undiminished commitment to nuclear disarmament will continue to guide participation in the Working Group on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament. At the same time, it will also be guided by the need for non-discriminatory and equitable measures that are in keeping with the United Nations Charter, which recognizes the sovereign equality of all its Members.

Our working paper and subsequent written submission on unilateral measures taken by India in nuclear disarmament will be adequately reflected, we hope, in the outcome document. It goes without saying that flexibility and understanding from all sides would be needed to reach agreement on a document that should add to the credibility of the Disarmament Commission.

The Working Group on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms has made considerable progress since the last session, and we now have a document which forms a basis for further work. It outlines the principles and characteristics of the confidence-building measures and attempts to provide practical examples that States or regions may choose to apply on a voluntary basis, taking into account the particular characteristics in each case. The outcome document should naturally avoid being prescriptive in any manner and should respect the sovereign right of each State to judge the situation and to decide freely as to which examples would be appropriate or inappropriate for a given context.

My delegation hopes that during the intervening period the two documents will be further evolved to pave the way for decisive action at the next session of the Disarmament Commission. We shall be ready to participate in any intersessional consultations and will, where necessary, provide written submissions to spur the process. If we succeed in our efforts, that will redound to the credit of this forum, which has a well-articulated and specific role in the multilateral process of disarmament.

Mr. Mohammed (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Arab States members of the League of Arab States and on the occasion of the conclusion of the first substantive session of the Disarmament Commission in 2001, my delegation wishes to extend

its thanks and gratitude to you, Madam Chairperson, and to the Chairpersons of the two Working Groups, Ms. Martinic and Mr. Osei, for all the efforts deployed in conducting our consultations in an atmosphere of harmony and flexibility. I also wish to thank all the delegations that have made useful, substantive suggestions during our meetings.

I cannot fail to extend thanks to the Secretariat and to all who have helped to facilitate our task and provided us with the various services, including documentation, and in particular the translation and interpretation services, for all their important efforts.

The States members of the Arab League also express their readiness to continue to cooperate with you, Madam, in the inter-sessional period and in providing you with suggestions for discussion on which we may achieve consensus on the guidelines for the next session's debates.

My delegation sincerely hopes that the same atmosphere of understanding and flexibility will prevail next year so that we may achieve consensus on the different issues related to disarmament in this Commission, the primary body for discussing the most important issues of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Pham Binh Minh (Viet Nam): I have the great honour to speak on behalf of the delegations of the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to express our deepest thanks to you, Madam, for your excellent manner of conducting the meetings of the Commission this year.

We should also like to express our appreciation for the dedicated efforts of the Chairman of Working Group I, Mr. Yaw Odei Osei, and of the Chairperson of Working Group II, Mrs. Gabriela Martinic. The ASEAN countries are very thankful for the contribution made by Mr. Timur Alasaniya, the Acting Secretary of the Commission, and other members of the Secretariat for their facilitating role and contribution.

We should also like to thank Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his counsel and contribution.

Finally, we would like to thank the conference officers, the interpreters and translators for their services, without which our Commission could not have concluded its work in such an excellent manner.

Mr. Du Preez (South Africa): In addition to the words of appreciation already expressed by other members of the Non-Aligned Movement, permit me, on behalf of the Movement and other States associated with it, to express our deep appreciation to you, Madam, whose country is a fellow member of the Movement, for the professional manner in which you guided the work of the Commission during this session. Your willingness to take up the chairmanship of the 2001 session, your particular style, positive approach and the friendly manner in which you conducted your tasks have set an example to all delegations. We trust that the good spirit in which you have guided us during this session will continue next year.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to the two Chairpersons of the Working Groups, Mr. Osei and Mrs. Martinic, for the commitment and encouragement they have shown in their respective Working Groups. The preparation of the working papers that should form the basis of next year's session of the Commission should guide us through our work in the inter-sessional period. On behalf of the Movement, I wish to encourage them to continue their work in the inter-sessional period and to guide us towards a successful conclusion of our work in both Working Groups.

I would also like to thank the members of the Bureau; the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, and his staff; the Acting Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Alasaniya; the respective Secretaries of the Working Groups; and other supporting staff for their important role in assisting delegations in our deliberations at this session.

Finally, but not least, we would also like to thank the interpreters and translators, who have been essential to the Commission's work.

Mr. Li Genxin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, I should like to express our sincere gratitude to you, Madam. We greatly appreciate your tireless efforts to ensure the success of this session.

I also wish to thank Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his efforts at this session.

We also wish to thank the two Chairpersons of the Working Groups, the representatives of Ghana and Argentina, for their fruitful efforts in guiding the negotiations on the items on our agenda and for their tireless work in the Working Groups.

Generally speaking, the work done at this session has been very useful. Members of the Commission have held in-depth discussions on confidence-building measures and the ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament. We have taken stock of our achievements and progress and made proposals for future deliberations. We seek peace and development, which are the common aspirations of the international community and which represent the current trend in the international arena.

However, in the field of international security, there remains some potential danger. The cold-war mentality and power politics have not disappeared. Practices that damage regional security continue to be followed and tensions still exist, while practices interfering with the internal affairs of States persist. The Chinese delegation believes that security is mutual and indivisible. We need to proceed on the basis of the principles of mutual trust and mutual benefit, conducting negotiations and dialogue on an equal footing. Only through such an approach can we truly maintain peace and security.

The Chinese delegation believes that the positive role of the Commission in laying down the principles of nuclear disarmament and in international arms control is irreplaceable. In the present situation, efforts must be made further to strengthen its role in that regard.

The Chinese delegation will, in a constructive manner, make its contributions to the work of this Commission.

Mr. Gosal (Canada): On behalf of the Group of Western European and other States, my delegation would like to thank you, Madam Chairperson, for all of your efforts and for the professional manner in which you have carried out your work. We would also like to thank the Chairman of Working Group I, Mr. Yaw Odei Osei of Ghana, and the Chairperson of Working Group II, Mrs. Gabriela Martinic of Argentina, for their efforts and hard work. I would also like to acknowledge the vital work done and the assistance provided by the Bureau and the Secretariat, namely, the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services and the interpreters.

The Chairperson: The weeks have passed swiftly, and we have already arrived at the close of the 2001 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. The task we set ourselves was not an easy one, for the issues which the Commission currently has under consideration are fundamental and critical to meaningful advancement of the disarmament agenda in both the nuclear and conventional fields.

I believe it is fitting that we have begun the new millennium with a commitment to explore new ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament and to develop practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. It sets the bar high for future action in pursuit of a strengthened regime for the enhancement of international peace and security. I am confident that if we can find our way to common ground on the scope and applicability of these measures, then we will have made a significant contribution towards refocusing our agenda and revitalizing debate and negotiation on the range of issues that remain a challenge in the field of disarmament.

The working paper on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament — which was introduced by the Chairman of Working Group I, the representative of Ghana — is in my view a good synthesis of the many facets of this issue. It builds on the Chairman's non-paper introduced at the beginning of this session, drawing on the Chairman's compilation of proposals, comments and oral and written submissions from delegations. While it is not a negotiating text, it attempts to present in a realistic way the achievements and current developments in the field of nuclear disarmament. It also acknowledges the work that still remains to be done.

The non-paper on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms — which was introduced by the Chairperson of Working Group II, the representative of Argentina — remains a sound basis for deliberation and future discussion. If the Commission will allow, I will cite a few statements on confidence-building measures (CBMs) contained in that non-paper, which I exhort Member States to keep in mind always as we grapple with the difficult issues on this agenda.

"The ultimate goal of CBMs in the field of conventional arms is to strengthen international peace and security and to contribute to the prevention of war.

"Confidence-building requires a consensus among the States participating in the process.

"By helping to create a climate in which the importance of the military element is gradually diminished, CBMs could in particular facilitate and promote the process of arms limitation and disarmament."

Such is the noble ideal which we to pursue through confidence-building measures.

I am sure delegations agree that the working paper of the Chairman of Working Group I and the non-paper of the Chairperson of Working Group II form a sound basis for the future work of the Commission. Make no mistake: there is still much to be done, and the task ahead of us for the coming session is a challenging one. However, if we continue to use to the fullest the opportunity for dialogue that this deliberative body offers, and if we can maintain the atmosphere of cooperation and goodwill that characterized this session, then I am confident that somehow we will find our way forward. To this end, I encourage wide participation in inter-sessional consultations as we prepare for the final consideration of these subjects next year.

In closing, I wish again to thank all delegations for the opportunity to serve as Chairperson of the Disarmament Commission at this substantive session. It was a great honour both for me and for my country, and I have emerged with a renewed respect for the important role that this specialized deliberative body can play in promoting consensus-building and in strengthening the framework for the enhancement of international peace and security.

I wish to express my gratitude to all delegations for their constructive spirit and the support extended to me and the members of the Bureau, who helped to shoulder the responsibility of ensuring the smooth conduct of this session of the Commission. To them I am particularly thankful.

I wish also to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his active interest in the work of the Commission and for his invaluable counsel to me and the Bureau, as well as to delegations.

The Chairperson is also indebted to the Secretary of the Commission, Mr. Timur Alasaniya, the Special Assistant to the Under-Secretary-General, Ms. Cheryl Stoute, the secretaries of the Working Groups and the staff of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services and of the Department for Disarmament Affairs for their invaluable support in facilitating the work of the Commission. May I also express the Commission's appreciation to the interpreters, the conference officers and the documents officers for their assistance during the session.

To those delegations leaving New York, I wish you very safe travel home.

Closure of the session

The Chairperson: I declare closed the 2001 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.